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Navy plans revamp of evaluation criteria

Emphasis to shift to sailors' day-to-day job performance Page 3



Above: Leroy Hernandez and his wife Evelyn Hernandez grieve the death of son Lance Cpl. Tony Hernandez at home in Canyon Lake, Texas. Hernandez was killed when a military transport helicopter crashed Wednesday in Iraq. Right: Sgt. David Tramill of Kaneohe, Hawaii, reacts to the news of the helicopter crash. All but three of the 30 Marines and one sailor killed when the CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter crashed in a desert sandstorm had been deployed from Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

A time to mourn troops in copter crash

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AP photo

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Scene on Sunday

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Archdiocese sex scandal: A man testified that the now-defrocked priest at the center of the Boston Archdiocese sex scandal would wait for him in the bathroom with the lights off, pull him from catechism classes and rape and fondle him in the church pews, confessional and rectory.

The man, now 27, recalled Wednesday how he saw Paul Shanley silhouetted against the hallway light, his hands outstretched in a priestly pose. He said the abuse began at age 6 and continued until 1989, when he was 12.

Gay custody battle: A woman whose daughter was adopted by her former lesbian partner has lost a court battle to regain custody in Houston.

The Texas Supreme Court declined Friday to hear a request by Julie Ann Hobbs of Galveston to dismiss a lawsuit filed in May by Janet Kathleen Van Stavern for joint custody and standard visitation of the 6-year-old girl.

Hobbs and Van Stavern were together for eight years, ending in February 2004. Hobbs conceived the girl through artificial insemination and gave birth in 1998.

Michael Jackson trial: The prosecution wants jurors in Michael Jackson's molestation trial in Los Angeles to have their own screening of a British television documentary about the pop star, a show that the defense denounced as "heavily edited in the most sensational fashion possible."

Broadcast in February 2003, "Living With Michael Jackson" was the trigger for an investigation leading to Jackson's child molestation case. It contains footage of Jackson holding hands with the child who has alleged he was molested by the entertainer.

New BTK evidence: A package purportedly tied to the BTK serial killings was found after a local television news station received a postcard directing it to the scene, a television station reported.

The Wichita, Kan., station KAKE-TV broke into its afternoon programming Tuesday to air footage of a cereal box leaning against a traffic sign along a road, but did not disclose its contents at the request of police.

Paid columnists: President Bush ordered his cabinet secretaries not to be columnists to promote administration agendas after disclosure that a second writer had been paid to assist an agency.



Schwarzenegger approval ratings: California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, right, shakes hands while visiting the PATH Residential Service Center, near downtown Los Angeles, on Tuesday. A survey from the Public Institute found 60 percent of Californians favor the way the Republican governor is doing his job, but 49 percent of Democrats disapprove. Six in 10 independent voters still give Schwarzenegger high marks, but the number of independents who disapprove of him has almost doubled, from 18 percent last year to 32 percent.

"All our Cabinet secretaries must realize that we will not be paying commentators to advance our agenda," Bush said.

Bush's remarks came a day after syndicated columnist Maggie Gallagher apologized to readers for not disclosing a \$21,500 contract with the Health and Human Services Department to help create materials promoting the agency's \$300 million initiative to encourage marriage.

Suspended judge resigns: Concord, N.H., Judge Franklin Jones, suspended for groping five women at a conference last year, resigned hours after a committee emphatically recommended that he not get his job back.

"I wish to again express my apologies to those who have been impacted by my inappropriate conduct," the Rochester District Court judge said in a letter to Gov. John Lynch and other state officials.

World

Zhao memorial service: China said Thursday it will hold a weekend memorial for ousted Communist Party leader Zhao Ziyang as authorities kept a tight watch on activists in an apparent effort to stem any public commemoration.

The "body farewell ceremony" will take place at 9 a.m. Saturday at Babaoshan Cemetery in Beijing, the main cemetery for revolutionary heroes.

The official said foreign reporters are barred from the event, which has a lower status than a state funeral.

Trouble in Sudan: The U.N. envoy to Sudan on Thursday called for the immediate release of three Sudanese employees of an American Christian aid agency who were abducted last month in South Darfur.

The workers, well-drillers of the Maryland-based Adventist Development and Relief Agency International, were captured at gunpoint on Dec. 16, the aid agency said.

Weapons ban in West Bank: The Palestinian leadership banned civilians on Thursday from carrying weapons, its latest step aimed at reining in militant violence, as the Palestinian leader said he was awaiting Israel's response on a proposal for a mutual cease-fire declaration.

If enforced, the ban on weapons would be a strong move against militant groups, whose gunmen often brandish their automatic weapons in the streets of Gaza and the West Bank.

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Navy to alter sailors' evaluations

Job performance will carry more weight than testing for promotions

By SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Sailors soon will see some major changes that will impact both their wallets and the way they're judged for promotion, the Navy's top personnel officer told sailors Thursday at Naval Support Activity Naples.

The service is changing how sailors' performance evaluations and promotions will be handled, which "won't happen tomorrow" but might be a reality within a year, Vice Adm. Gerry Hoewing said during a morning all-hands meeting with sailors from southern-Italy bases. Hoewing is winding down a European tour of bases.

Leaders evaluating sailors' accomplishments will put more emphasis on their day-to-day job performance rather than on criteria such as time-in-grade, time-in-service and "test-taking strategies," Hoewing said. But the latter criteria still will be considered.

Sailors who might be highly proficient in their jobs but horrible at taking tests and thus penalized, for example, will fare better under the change. A pilot program already in place mirrors the system used for flag officers, who are judged heavily on their job performances.

Hoewing discussed the changes during two all-hands meetings — the first for sailors E-6 and below and the second for those E-7 and higher.

The lower enlisted sailors were a much feistier group, asking pointed questions on a

variety of topics ranging from the Navy's plan to merge ratings, training and promotion opportunities, retirement options, and how to qualify for bonuses.

Petty Officer 1st Class Marilyn Gelleagan praised the idea of performance-based evaluations.

"I think it's fair. Sailors who are motivated — those who do things to improve themselves, go to school, do extra off duty — they will be recognized," she said. "I really like it. It will motivate people to compete with each other. We're moving to a very competitive Navy, and those who lose will be the ones to adapt."

Capt. Jeff Landis, spokesman for Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs, said officials have not made or discussed major changes to the Marine Corps' promotion system, but do consider job performance as a major factor when making those decisions. Corps officials have made minor adjustments to the system in recent years, like updating fitness requirements and increasing the value of professional military education when considering promotions, Landis said. The Air Force uses a point system for enlisted promotions, according to Capt. David Small. Points are awarded for grade, time

in service, test results, decorations, and performance reports.

While performance reports are "heavily weighed" in the promotion process, Small said he could not immediately quantify what percentage that represents in an airman's total score.

The Army also scores enlisted promotions on a point system that includes both objective criteria, such as time in grade and test scores, and evaluations — although Army promotions are divided into three categories, depending on grade, according to spokesman Lt. Col. Kevin Arata.

In Naples, Hoewing also said the Navy is broadening its Selective Re-enlistment Bonus program, upping the bonus amount for some ratings and including others that before were not eligible.

The Navy has faced challenges getting sailors in hard-to-fill jobs such as nuclear specialists, special operations, and explosive ordnance teams, he said.

The service is considering raising the maximum SRB payout from \$45,000 to \$60,000 for a six-year re-enlistment commitment for Navy SEALs, and also considering expanding the SRB to ratings such as aviation boatswain's mate and damage-control

hull technician, said Lt. Kyle Raines, a Navy Personnel Command spokesman.

The Navy also is merging ratings, or jobs, to make broader categories and give sailors more career opportunities while cutting down on redundancies, Hoewing said.

But Petty Officer 2nd Class Tim Witter said he was concerned that sailors already proficient in one rating will be penalized if ratings merge, especially if tested on material for promotions in skills they didn't perform before ratings were combined.

Adequate training would be provided to get sailors proficient in all duties, Hoewing said. The performance evaluation changes would help lessen any impact of the merges, he said, because test scores won't be as heavily considered.

In other topics, he said the Navy would like some latitude when it comes to retirement qualifications. Last year, Congress denied the Navy's request to change a retirement-eligibility requirement, which by law requires all servicemembers to serve a minimum of 20 years to qualify for benefits.

But as technology improves, "some skill sets are not going to be needed in the 21st century," he said, but couldn't provide any specific examples.

Instead of keeping sailors in for the sake of keeping them until the 20-year mark, or having them get out without rewarding a decade or more of military service, Navy leaders want leeway to offer retirement opportunities at, say, 12 or 15 years of service, he said.

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Families learn tips for coping with deployment

By VINCE LITTLE
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Parents dealing with a spouse's absence brought on by the tsunami-relief effort, Middle East deployment or other temporary-duty assignment gathered Wednesday at the Yokota Enlisted Club to hear about various coping methods.

The Parent Talk on Deployment, sponsored by Yokota East Elementary School and Yokota Middle School, was the first forum of its kind, according to school psychologist Sandi Johnston, the event's chief organizer. Hugh Clark, a Family Advocacy volunteer, led the discussion, touching on deployment stresses on all family members and outlining different ways for them to adjust.

The session was timely: About 500 Yokota airmen are away supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Free-

dom and the U.S. military's tsunami-relief missions in South Asia.

"It's important to have these types of things available," Clark said. "The sad thing is, people don't always utilize them. Programs are huge here and they're available."

Understanding the sources of stress during separation periods is critical to handling its impact, he said. Managing almost every aspect of life — from finances and friends to health concerns and the isolation of being so far from home — are contributing factors.

Master Sgt. Terry Cross of the Family Support Center said families should attend pre-deployment briefings to get a stronger grasp on difficulties they might face. "It helps to deal with stress if you know what stresses you're facing," he said.

Clark offered some coping strategies for spouses, which include sticking to priorities, organizing tasks, getting adequate sleep, allowing for personal time every day, eating well-balanced meals and regular exercise. He also encouraged the group to develop a healthy mental outlook.

"Check your thinking," he said. "That's a problem a lot of us probably face. The shaping of views is very important. The mind gets programmed a certain way. Some programs are good. Some need tweaking every now and then."



JIM SCHULZ/Stars and Stripes

Volunteer Hugh Clark helps family members of deployed servicemembers at Yokota Air Base, Japan, devise strategies for coping with the stress of daily life without a spouse at home.

When one parent is deployed, he said, some children — particularly younger ones — often display troubling signs such as extreme neediness, changes in eating or sleeping patterns, complaints of physical illness with no apparent cause, fears related to events, withdrawal or intense sadness, concentration problems and regressive behavioral patterns.

Clark urges parents left behind to keep lines of communication

open — even if that means scheduling a daily or weekly time to talk — while maintaining pre-deployment habits and practices when possible.

"Routines are reassuring and comforting for everyone but especially young children," he added.

News reports — particularly those from Iraq detailing terrorist bombings, beheadings and kidnappings — should be avoided, he warned, adding that parents also must carefully temper their reaction to such current events.

"Do not watch this stuff," Clark told the forum. "There are other ways you can let your children know what's going on in the world, without seeing gruesome or graphic images."

Susan Simmons brought her daughters Kaitlyn, 14, and Courtney, 11, to Wednesday's workshop. Her husband, Capt. James Simmons of the 37th Comptroller Squadron, left for the Middle East in December.

"This is our fourth deployment," she said. "It never gets easy but you kind of know what to expect. We also have the very, very best support system. His squadron has been phenomenal, with regular calls and e-mails. All we have to do is mention something and someone from the squadron is over to help."

The family also copes with the separation by staying away from TV news reports, she added.

"We know too that this is something he believes in," Simmons said. "That makes it easier because we know it's something he wants to do, and we support him."

Johnston said future forums aimed at reducing the burden of deployments on families and children remain likely.

Contact the Family Support Center at DSN 225-8725 or Family Advocacy at DSN 225-3648 for information about Yokota's assistance programs.

E-mail Vince Little at: little@strips.com

Correction

A brief in Friday's edition of Stars and Stripes incorrectly stated that a change-of-command ceremony for U.S. Forces Japan and 5th Air Force will be held at 10 a.m. Feb. 10 in Hangar 15 at Yokota Air Base, Japan.

Misawa park picks Snoopy for snow sculpture theme

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

MISAWA NAVAL AIR FACILITY, Japan — Adopting a more light-hearted theme this year, a team of five Misawa sailors will carve Peanuts character Snoopy as the Red Baron flying ace at the 56th Sapporo Snow Festival next month on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido.

It's the 22nd year in a row the Navy at Misawa has sent sailors to Japan's most famous winter festival, slated for Feb. 7-13.

In years past, the team carved Lady Liberty after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Lone Sailor in honor of those killed in the 2000 terrorist bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen and the doomed space shuttle Columbia.

Snoopy piloting his doghouse rose to the top of the list this year because "it's something that the team all liked, and we felt comfortable it was something we all could do," said Chief Petty Officer Ramsey Gaines, the team leader.

Besides, "cartoon characters are really popular in Japan," he said.

About 2 million people come to the Sapporo Snow Festival each year to see snow sculptures as tall as houses, some with giant slides for children. The festival began in 1950 when local high school students built six snow figures in Odori Park five years later, the Japan Self-Defense Force built the first massive snow sculpture.

For Misawa Navy personnel, the annual sojourn to Hokkaido's winter wonderland is above all a community relations venture, Gaines said. Japanese Ground Self-Defense Forces will host the sailors in Army barracks at Camp Sapporo. They'll also meet with Sapporo city council members and mingle with Japanese spectators while carving a 10-foot block of snow.

"The best part is interacting with the Japanese," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Joshua Mosenthin, a Seabee with Misawa's public works department and a veteran carrier of the local Misawa snow festivals. "A lot of times the school kids come out and want to do interviews with you."

Joining Mosenthin and Gaines are Petty Officer 1st Class Tom Dary, Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronald Davis and Seaman Apprentice James Rucker. They applied and were selected by the team to be part of this year's team.

Also preparing for the Hokkaido trip is a team of four from Yokota Air Base near Tokyo who will represent the United States in the festival's international competition, according to team organizer Dave Russo, a retiree and civilian employee at Yokota.

Yokota has sent a team to Sapporo every year for more than 30 years, Russo said. Team members in the early days were goodwill ambassadors but, about 16 years ago, Yokota gained official sponsor status from the U.S. Embassy to represent the United States in international competition, Russo said.



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

A team of sailors from Misawa Naval Air Facility, Japan — from left: Petty Officer 1st Class Tom Dary, Seaman Apprentice James Rucker, Petty Officer 2nd Class Joshua Mosenthin, Chief Petty Officer Ramsey Gaines and Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronald Davis — will carve a Snoopy the Red Baron snow sculpture that will be on display during the Feb. 7-13 56th annual Sapporo Snow Festival on Hokkaido.

Team members this year are Tech. Sgt. Timothy Burns, 374th Transportation Squadron; Tech. Sgt. Bobby Jones, 374th Communications Squadron; Ronald Hawkins, an English teacher in the local community outside Yokota; and the team manager, Tech. Sgt. Michael Brogan.

The Yokota crew will carve an American bald eagle, competing against 16 other countries for the prize of grand champion.

"The main prize we strive for is bragging rights," Russo said. "If USA wins, we get a flag" that's passed down to the first-place winner every year and displayed in front of the winning sculpture for the festival's duration.

Carving in the international competition starts Feb. 5, before the festival officially kicks off. Teams have four days to finish their sculpture and may work from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, Russo said.

"Every year we try to do something representing America," Russo said. "At the end of the day, you can barely bend your arms to reach your hair because you're hurting so bad, but it's a lot of pride."

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Teachers happy to have Harvard help

Pacific instructors learn to employ math earlier

By FRED ZIMMERMAN

Stars and Stripes

TORII STATION, Okinawa — Elementary schools throughout the Pacific and Guam teamed with Harvard University to provide educators with additional math training.

A total of 42 Department of Defense Dependents Schools Pacific and Domestic Dependent Elementary and Secondary Schools Guam teachers took part in an online program from September to

December. The program, "Teaching Math Fundamentals on the Way to Algebraic Thinking in the Elementary School," is offered through WIDE World, the Education Technology Center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The school district offered the course to provide professional development for its elementary school teachers, according to Steven R. Bloom, deputy director of DODDS Pacific/DESS Guam. He said the training helps the educators professionally, in turn helps them better prepare their pupils for middle and high schools.

Algebra hasn't traditionally been taught in most U.S. elementary schools. But research indicates pupils perform better on tests of mathematical understanding when teachers incorporate algebraic thinking into classroom instruction, according to the Harvard Graduate School of Education Web site, www.worldp.harvard.edu.

In elementary school, "the Web site says, 'this means investigating numerical patterns and relationships, learning to describe patterns mathematically and using patterns to make predictions.' Students also begin using symbols, sometimes invented and sometimes of a standard nature, to model problem situations, and express generalizations."

The site states that the course

helps teachers realize how pupils use algebraic thinking and helps teachers develop strategies that support developing algebraic thinking in their pupils.

Megan Smith, a third-grade teacher at Stearley Heights Elementary School on Kadena Air Base, said the training "helped me see how important algebraic thinking is to building a [mathematical] foundation." Since taking the course, Smith said, she now "steps outside the textbook"

while teaching math by investigating patterns and repetition of patterns.

Those who took part in the training were divided into teams: three or four teachers per team from the schools that participated, said June Schneider, DODDS Pacific/DESS Guam elementary curriculum specialist. Each team would discuss what team members had read and assignments they completed.

also used what they learned during classroom discussion and later reflect collectively on how the lessons went.

In addition to team discussions, Schneider said, the teams shared their experiences online with others taking the course.

"We're moving beyond the idea that math is just dealing with facts ... it's a much deeper level of understanding," Schneider said.

Future involvement with the course is to be determined, Bloom said. The teachers who took part filled out a survey on the course for Harvard; the district also is following up with its own survey. Bloom said the initial feedback is that although the course requires a lot of work, it's beneficial and enlightening.

The training, Schneider said, "may have given the teams a point of reference on why we teach certain things at different grade levels. It enriches what we're already doing."

E-mail Fred Zimmerman at: zimmerman@stripes.osd.mil

Repairs interrupt water flow

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Several housing areas and schools here were left with little water pressure Wednesday night as the water was shut off so lines could be serviced.

The water flow, shut off by Kadena Air Base civil engineers at approximately 10 p.m., was restored several hours later, once the work was complete, said Marine Master Sgt. Joseph King, Camp Services chief for camps Foster and Lester. The lines served were on Camp Foster, near the Sada Housing area.

As a result of low water pressure, the base asked residents and workers not to

drink the water until its potability had been tested. King said the tests, being run by Housing Maintenance, would take 24 hours, with results received by 10 a.m. Friday.

It's normal procedure to test the water when you have low pressure because the water just kind of sits there in the lines," he said.

Areas affected include Kishaba Terrace, Sada Housing, North Towers, Kishaba Towers, Zukeran and Killen elementary schools and Kubasaki High School.

Announcements not to drink the water were posted via e-mail and appeared on American Forces Network, as well as flyers and signs throughout the base spread

the word, King said. Residents are asked to call Camp Services at 645-7317 for more information.

Mayors submit relocation letter

Mayors of the cities hosting Camp Sada, Japan, said any U.S. military troop relocation to Camp Sada shouldn't be allowed, Japanese officials said Thursday.

Zama City's mayor, Katsujir Hoshino, and Sagamihara City's deputy mayor, Toshio Kayama, met Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura on Wednesday and expressed opposition to any troop relocation to Camp Sada that may lead to strengthening or prolonging base operations, alluding to unconfirmed

media reports of possible relocation of the Army's I Corps headquarters and Okinawa-based Marines to Camp Sada.

A letter of request submitted by the mayors also called for the government to re-examine the necessity of having U.S. military facilities in their cities and to return any part of the facilities not being used, or the would-be relocation to urban planning, since congestion is significant in the two cities.

"Reducing the burden on Okinawa has been the focus in the transformation issue but reducing the burden on the local cities — in other words, consolidation and return of the bases — is the earnest desire of Sagamihara and Sada residents, just as in Okinawa," the letter stated.

From staff reports

U.S. mourns troops killed on deadliest day

27 Hawaii-based Marines died in Iraq helo crash

By B.J. REYES

The Associated Press

KAILUA, Hawaii — A sudden and painful reminder of the war in Iraq hit this state with word that 27 Marines from one base had been killed in the worst loss of Hawaii-based troops since Pearl Harbor.

All but three of the 30 Marines and one sailor killed when a helicopter crashed Wednesday in a desert sandstorm had been deployed from the Marine Corps base at Kaneohe Bay, according to Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii.

"We are particularly feeling the effects of the war in Hawaii," Akaka said in a statement from his Washington office. "My heartfelt thoughts, prayers and deepest sympathies go to the families of each Marine."

The crash shook the Windward Oahu community near the base as residents awaited the names of the dead. "Your heart just sinks," said Bobbie Jerome, 34, whose Marine husband has not been deployed to Iraq.

The Kaneohe Bay base is under

the operational control of the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, near Oceanside, Calif. Some of the victims also were based in San Diego.

While the Marines come from hometowns across America, no single military attack or accident stands out as hitting Hawaii harder since the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor that left 2,390 people dead and 1,178 wounded.

"That's a tragic story for everybody here," Bob Reeve, 71, a retiree who lives near the Kaneohe base, said after hearing the news. "We like our military here. It's going to be a sad thing."

The crash dramatically increased the death toll of servicemen with Hawaii ties in Iraq and Afghanistan to 78, including 43 Marines from the Kaneohe base.

In Oceanside, Amber Warlock, 31, a former Marine whose husband is a Marine pilot currently stationed at Camp Pendleton, said she was stunned when she heard about the crash on television.

"You hear about people dying every day in ones and twos," she said. "But 31 is just too much to comprehend."

Warlock sought solace at the beach with her 5-month-old daughter, Heidi, and a fellow Marine wife who cried at news of the deaths, even though she had confirmed her deployed husband was OK.

"You just know how every single woman sitting in here some feels, whether it's going to be yours or someone you know," Warlock said. "It doesn't matter who it is. It's a bad day for everybody."

Back in Kailua, Lee Bowman, 25, a Navy medic who served in Iraq last year, said of the victims: "My heart goes out to them. I feel it's going to be hard to replace them." As word of the crash reached this town next to the Marine base, at least one said the tragedy would bring people in the military community together.

"It's a unity building thing," said Margaret Franks, 52, a substitute teacher at a county-run Kailua high school. "I hate to have them feel like they have to be the cause for us to be more united."

Associated Press writers T.A. Badger in Honolulu and Kelli Brown of California contributed to this report.



Courtesy of the Linn family/AP

U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Karl Linn of Chesterfield, Va., poses with his rifle at his base in Iraq's Anbar Province. Linn was killed in an ambush on a convoy he was riding on Wednesday near Hadithah, Iraq.

Va. loses 4 'brothers'

The Associated Press

LYNCHBURG, Va. — Four Marines from a combat engineering company were killed and four injured during an ambush on the deadliest day in Iraq for U.S. troops.

The four were killed in Iraq's Anbar Province and were among 36 American troops killed in Iraq on Wednesday. Thirty-one were killed in a Marine helicopter crash in the western desert.

Capt. Jamie Wagner of Company C, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, on Thursday identified the dead as: Sgt. Jesse Strong, 24, of Albany, Vt., a student at Liberty University in Lynchburg; Cpl. Jonathan Bowling, 23, of Stuart; Cpl. Christopher Weaver, 24, of Spotsylvania; and Lance Cpl. Karl Linn, 20, of Chesterfield.

"The Marine Corps is truly a band of brothers and we lost four brothers from this company," Wagner said. "But we continue to do our jobs and continue to carry on as Marines."

Company C, part of the 4th Combat Engineer Battalion, based in Baltimore, was activated in June 2003, Wagner said, and left for Iraq in September 2003. They were to return home in the spring.

A reporter embedded with those troops, Maj. Delany of WABC in New York City, said the four were killed when insurgents ambushed a Marine convoy leaving the town of Haditha, northwest of Baghdad, hitting a vehicle with a rocket-propelled grenade.

Wagner, senior active duty adviser with Company C, identified the injured as: Cpl. Charles Gentry, Cumberland, Tenn.; Sgt. William Meyers of Mooresville, N.C.; and Lance Cpl. Mark Miller of Bedford, each was hospitalized with minor injuries, Wagner said. Cpl. Timothy Franklin of Lynchburg was also treated for injuries.

In Iraq, Company C was involved with the search for weapons caches, sweeping roads for explosives and building fighting positions, Wagner said.

Calif. military town stung by deaths

The Associated Press

OCEANSIDE, Calif. — This seaside military town reacted with grief and resolve Wednesday at the news that 31 servicemen were killed when a transport helicopter crashed in the deadliest single incident yet for U.S. forces in Iraq.

"It's terrible, but it comes with the territory," said Carl Dreibleb, 52, an Oceanside native who served in the Navy and said members of his family have fought in every U.S. war since the American Revolution.

"I'm afraid that when people hear this, their inclinations will be to retreat. But I say charge," Dreibleb said.

Some of the victims were members of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, based at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego. Further details were withheld pending notification of families.

The crew chief onboard the helicopter, Lance Cpl. Tony Hernandez,

deployed to Iraq last summer and was scheduled to return to Camp Pendleton in March, said Sgt. Leroy Hernandez, of Canyon Lake, Texas.

Hernandez

He said he last spoke with his son on Sunday.

"He said it was cold, that he didn't like the weather, that he was working his butt off — the usual gripes," Hernandez said. "He didn't say a lot because he didn't want anyone to worry."

The previous deadliest incident in Iraq for American servicemen was also a helicopter crash. In November 2004, two Black Hawks collided while trying to avoid ground fire, killing 17 servicemen.

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General: Iraq forces to be released in 6 months

By BASSEM MROUE

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraqi troops need six more months before they can take control of cities and towns, Iraq's army chief said Thursday. Afterward, it would still need help from U.S. and other foreign forces to protect the country's borders.

Gen. Babaker Shawkat Zebari said he was optimistic about prospects for bolstering the capabilities of Iraq's security forces — a key U.S. goal as the White House comes under domestic political pressure to reduce the American military commitment here.

"God willing, during this year, our units will be fully trained, armed, equipped and ready," Zebari, an ethnic Kurd, said. "After all this is finished, I am very optimistic that the Iraqi army will be able to protect the territories and border."

Zebari said that if Iraqi forces continue to improve, "we will be able to protect Iraqi cities and villages within six months."

Pentagon officials hope to accelerate the training of Iraqi security forces after the Sunday national elections so that they can assume the main role in fighting the insurgency. That would enable Washington to begin bringing home the 15,000 U.S. troops.

On Wednesday, however, the top U.S. commander here, Gen. George Casey, said Iraqi forces were not ready to take over the fight against the insurgents and there was no guarantee they would ever be able to do so.

But Zebari said he was hopeful that over the next six months, the insurgents could be weakened militarily as Iraqi forces grow in confidence and capability.



JOSEPH GORDON/STARS AND STRIPES

Sgt. 1st Class Jefferson Priddy, handing out election information to Iraqis in the Tammim district near Ramadi.

U.S. role in Iraqi vote criticized

BY COLUM LYNCH
The Washington Post

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations' top elections official, Carina Perelli, on Wednesday sharply criticized U.S. military forces in Iraq for distributing material urging Iraqis to vote in the country's elections Sunday.

Perelli and other U.N. officials are concerned that such U.S. military involvement is compromising efforts to convince the Iraqi public that Iraqis are directing the elections.

Perelli said she and the top U.N. election official in Iraq, Carlos Valenzuela, have been "asking, begging military commanders" to stop the distribution of material promoting the elections. Officials from the U.N.-backed Iraqi Electoral Commission have also asked the United States to stop, she said.

The U.S. military have been extremely, I would say, overenthusiastic in trying to help out with this election," she told reporters. "And we have been basically saying that they should try to minimize their participation, because this is an Iraqi process."

Informed by a reporter that U.S. soldiers have distributed voting material in recent weeks, Perelli said: "I'm glad that you report it, because I'm going to be screaming on the phone in two minutes."

A significant voter turnout in Iraq's elections would help bolster the Bush administration's case that the political transition there enjoys widespread public support.

On Wednesday, President Bush urged Iraqis to "defy these terrorists'" seeking to intimidate voters and go to the polls.

He predicted that "millions of Iraqi voters will show their bravery, their love of country and their desire to live in freedom" by casting votes.

Asked to respond to Perelli's comments, Gen. John Abizaid, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, said: "We understand that this is an Iraqi election" and "American soldiers do not have the mission to get the vote out."

But a Pentagon spokesman, Lt. Col. Barry Venable, said: "It is my understanding that the U.S. soldiers and other coalition forces patrolling in various places there have been handing out, if you will, some elections education material" produced by the Iraqi Electoral Commission.

Iraq election a test for Bush doctrine

BY HANNAH ALLAM
AND STEVEN BUTLER
Knight Ridder Newspapers

BAGHDAD — A big test of President Bush's initiative to promote democracy everywhere will come Sunday in Iraq, which holds its first elections since U.S. troops toppled Saddam Hussein's regime nearly two years ago.

The elections are likely to be messy, like much of the political process in Iraq since Bush declared an end to major combat on May 1, 2003. They could lead to civil war among Iraq's competing ethnic groups or they could mark an important step toward democracy and a stable Iraq self-rule.

What's the election for?
Iraqis will elect an interim national assembly of 275 representatives that will have several important jobs. One key task is selecting a committee to draft a permanent constitution that will set rules for new elections next year.

It will also appoint a president and two vice presidents. Those jobs are likely to go one-each to leaders from Iraq's three main ethnic groups, the majority Shiite Muslims, the Sunni Muslim Arab minority and the Kurds. The president will appoint a prime minister to head the government.

Why does it matter?

The election is an important step — but hardly the last — in a long process of handing control of Iraqi affairs on back to the Iraqis. A general election in which citizens vote freely for people to represent them confers broad acceptance on a government like nothing else. If the voting goes well, it will achieve that, but the prospect of low participation by some of Iraq's ethnic groups — especially Sunni Muslims — is certain to undermine the government to some degree.

For whom will Iraqis cast votes?

Voters will vote not for individuals but for broad slates of candidates. The United Nations backed this kind of election in June because it argued there wasn't enough time and it would be too divisive to set up individual electoral districts by their own representatives. Each slate will appoint representatives to the assembly according to the percentage of the total vote it receives.

Who's likely to win?

The United Iraqi Alliance, backed by religious leaders of Iraq's majority Shiite Muslims, is likely to come out on top. Prime Minister Ayad Allawi's slate might also do well. The downtrodden Shiites — long ruled by the Sunni minority — will be the real winner.

Isn't there a big boycott of the election?
Yes. Major political parties representing the Sunnis, accounting for about 20 percent of the population, are boycotting the election. They say there's too much violence for the pollsters to feel safe in going to the polls. That's likely to result in Sunnis getting little representation in the assembly.

Will there be a civil war? It's possible. The Sunnis are the main force behind the insurgency, and they've launched frequent attacks on the Shiites. If the Sunnis get few representatives in the government, support for the insurgency could grow.

At the same time there are proposals for fixes after the election, such as appointing Sunnis to the assembly, making sure they're on committees drafting the constitution and seeing that they get important Cabinet posts in the government. Sunnis might be persuaded to support the permanent constitution and join elections at that time.

Will U.S. troops start pulling out after the election?

Probably not. Bush has vowed to stay as long as needed. The election coalition most likely to dominate the vote has dropped demands for the United States to set a timetable for withdrawal.



Hewar art gallery owner Qasim al-Sabti, left, listens as a group of Iraqis men discuss the upcoming election Tuesday in the front yard of the gallery in the Waziriyah district of Baghdad.

A civil debate in the face of unrest

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Automatic fire rattled a short distance away as Qasim al-Sabti and a group of friends gathered in an outdoor safe on a cold January morning to debate Iraq's election.

What caught the men's attention, however, wasn't the gunfire, but what al-Sabti said next.

"I am going to vote for Ayad Alawi," al-Sabti, a prominent Sunni Arab painter, casually declared.

His support for Alawi's Shiite prime minister, however, did not lead to any violence or hate-filled arguments. Instead, in the Hewar Art gallery eatery that serves as a gathering place for Baghdad's artistic and intellectual elite, the statement kicked off a debate on the country's elections.

Sunday's vote has taken on a dangerous racial and religious slant, including a Sunni-led insurgency.

Against this backdrop, al-Sabti and his friends offer a ray of hope that Iraqis — a mix of religious and racial groups — can live together in peace. At Hewar, Arabic for dialogue, they prove it

every day when many others are fast losing faith.

"Sometimes, voices are raised, and that's when I intervene," said al-Sabti, who has an uncanny ability to improvise rhymed verse, and often inserts a funny line. "But I swear to you by God Almighty, it's a healthy exchange."

Al-Sabti's friends are painters, poets, actors, sculptors and critics. Their vision of Iraq contrasts sharply with the sectarian incitement posted on the Internet by Sunni militant groups.

Al-Sabti, who quit Saddam Hussein's Baath Party to protest the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, created Hewar in Waziriyah, a mixed Baghdad neighborhood, in 1994 to give Iraq's artistic community a meeting place. Saddam's ouster nearly two years ago resulted in international fame, when the gallery showed sculptures depicting Iraq's history.

"This place is like Iraq in the 1960s," he says. "It was such a romantic time, even in Iraq. Everyone now tries to resurrect the spirit of the 1960s. In Hewar, we succeeded."

U.S. Postal Service, military help get mail to S. Korean soldiers

BY TERI WEAVER
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL — Letters and care packages to South Korean soldiers in Iraq have been hitching a ride with the U.S. Postal Service for the past five months in a joint effort to help troops get mail from home during their yearlong deployment, according to U.S. military officials.

Since August, the U.S. Army and Air Force have flown more than 22,000 pounds of mail to the South Korean soldiers, according to Anthony S. Cuccia, the postal operations officer at Gimpo International Airport in

Seoul. The arrangement came about after South Korean officials asked for help in delivering mail to their troops, he said.

The South Korean government pays \$14.86 for each pound sent to Iraq, and \$16.05 for each pound that comes into South Korea, according to Cuccia. The cost is based on the costs of shipping and other factors, he said.

On Thursday, 461 pounds of mail bound for South Korean troops arrived at Gimpo. Each bag was tagged with an English-language label designating the mail for South Korean soldiers in Iraq.

"Anybody in our system knows that this

mail is going to Korean soldiers in Irbil," Cuccia said.

From Gimpo, the mailbags are flown to Kuwait City, where a small contingent of South Korean marines are stationed. Those marines take over the delivery duties, flying the mail to the soldiers in Irbil, Cuccia said.

South Korea has about 3,600 troops inside Iraq, the third-largest contingent in the U.S.-led invasion, according to an Associated Press report. Last year, South Korean lawmakers approved renewing that commitment for another 12 months.

E-mail Teri Weaver at: weaver@stripes.com

Rumsfeld: No set plans on future troop levels in Iraq

BY PATRICK DICKSON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Wednesday dismissed a report that said the Army would not reduce troop numbers in Iraq at least through 2006.

Speaking after a House Armed Services Committee meeting, Rumsfeld said it would be "a misunderstanding to characterize" statements made by Army Lt. Gen. James Loveless to mean the service had firm plans to keep the force at present levels.

The Washington Post reported, and Stars and Stripes subsequently printed, a story that said the

Army expected to keep its troop strength in Iraq at about 120,000 soldiers for at least two more years.

The Post quoted Loveless as saying, "We're making the assumption that the level of effort is going to continue."

Asked if he agreed with the assessment, Rumsfeld said it was routine planning for multiple scenarios.

"It certainly was not an assessment of any kind, and he said that very explicitly, if I'm not mistaken," Rumsfeld said.

"He said that the Army has to plan, it has to look forward, and it looks forward one, two, three years. And what they do is develop an assumption."

"And so they said for the sake of the argument, assume you kept the same level of forces there over that period, how would we meet that?"

"Then they do various sensitivities, they say what if it's more, what if it's less? Then they say, 'How would we deal with that situation?'"

E-mail Pat Dickson at: dicksonp@stripes.com or ndickson@stripes.com



Rumsfeld



An Iraqi school keeper removes school records from the rubble after an explosion Thursday in Baghdad. Eleven Iraqis and one Marine were killed in election violence Thursday as insurgents clashed with U.S. troops and blew up a school slated to serve as a polling center.

Marine, 11 Iraqis killed in clashes

BY SAMEER N. YACUB
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Eleven Iraqis and one Marine were killed Thursday as insurgents clashed with U.S. troops and blew up a school slated to serve as a polling center — pre-election violence that followed the deadline for U.S. troops since the war's start. Another U.S. soldier died in an accident.

The Marine was killed and five others were injured when insurgents launched mortars at their base near Iskandariyah, about 30 miles south of Baghdad.

In the capital, U.S. and Iraqi troops clashed with insurgents on Haifa street in the center of the city, witnesses reported.

The attacks came after the deadline day for U.S. forces since the Iraq war began nearly two years ago: 30 Marines and a Navy sailor died when a helicopter crashed in bad weather in the western desert Wednesday, and six other U.S. troops were killed in insurgent ambushes (see related stories on Page 4).

Attacks have increased ahead of Sunday's national elections, when Iraqis will choose a 275-member legislature and provincial councils across the country in the first balloting since the 2003 ouster of Saddam Hussein. Sunni Muslim militants have vowed to undermine the elections, fearing victory at the polls by the Shiite Muslim majority.

Three Iraqi civilians were killed Thursday in a house in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, when a car bomb exploded nearby, said Alaaeddin Mohammed, a doctor at the local hospital.

Hours later, mortar shells fell on a designated polling station in Samarra, police said.

Also in Samarra, armed men blew up a school administration building after first ordering the staff to leave, said police Lt. Qassim Mohammed. The destroyed building had been scheduled to be a voting center Sunday.

Sporadic clashes also erupted in Samarra between U.S. troops and armed men, killing one Iraqi civilian and injuring another, Mohammed said.

In Kirkuk, insurgents attacked seven polling stations with mortars and machine guns and opened fire on a police patrol, killing one policeman, authorities said.

A suicide car bomber struck a U.S. military convoy near the northern city of Beiji, witnesses said. There were no reports of casualties.

Another three Iraqis were killed and seven injured when a roadside bomb missed a U.S. convoy in Mahmoudiya, 20 miles south of Baghdad, according to the area's hospital director, Dawoud al-Taie.

Near Tikrit, a roadside bomb killed one Iraqi bystander and narrowly missed another passing U.S. military convoy, police said.

The attack happened on a road near Saddam's hometown, about 30 miles north of Baghdad, said police Lt. Sholan Alawi.

The body of Talib Minshid, a colonel in the former Iraqi intelligence under Saddam, was found in Baquba, according to a hospital official, Mohammed Ali. Minshid had been abducted by armed men two days ago.

A U.S. soldier died Thursday of a gunshot wound on a base near Tikrit in what the American military command called an accident.

U.S. troops in Iraq security for Iraq election

BY CHRIS TOMLINSON
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. soldiers around Baghdad stepped up operations Thursday ahead of the Iraqi election, moving to forward positions around the capital until the end of balloting while toughening security at their main bases, a brigade commander said.

Hundreds of soldiers assigned to the Louisiana National Guard's 256th Brigade moved out from Camp Liberty, located near Baghdad's main airport, to take up positions at the smaller bases scattered around the city ahead of Sunday's vote.

U.S. troops will not be positioned at polling sites — Iraqi forces will be on guard there. But deploying more troops outside of the main, heavily guarded bases will enable them to respond quickly if needed by Iraqi forces, said Brig. Gen. John Basilia.

"We're hoping to enable the Iraqi security forces to be successful in defending the polling sites so their countrymen can vote," said Basilia, the commander of the brigade. "It's a critical time for them."

At the same time, security at the main U.S. bases will be ratcheted up to protect support troops from attack, Basilia said.

Altogether, about 300,000 Iraqi and multinational troops will provide security for the vote with Iraq's U.S.-trained forces taking the lead role.

The Iraqi Defense Ministry said Thursday it would deploy an

additional three battalions, or 2,500 troops, to help guard the elections. "We will prevent any terrorist attacks during the voting," the ministry said in a statement.

Insurgents have promised to disrupt the voting with car bombings and other attacks, and U.S. and Iraqi officials have warned of increased violence in the days ahead of the vote. The election is for a National Assembly that will govern the country and draft a permanent constitution.

On Wednesday, Basilia's troops got a taste of what may be in store for them as election day nears. Insurgents fired mortar rounds at an Iraqi police station where a company of American military police are based in the suburb of Saba Al-Boor, north of Baghdad.

Four shells fell near the station, each one getting progressively closer to the Iraqi police and U.S. soldiers barricaded inside — a targeting technique known as "walking up" the fire. Within minutes, Apache attack helicopters were overhead.

A patrol from E Troop, 101st Cavalry, which was in the town when the mortars fell, sent troops to look for the Iraqi mortars. But as happens in most attacks, the insurgents died before U.S. troops could find them.

Soldiers in the field have been given lists of suspect vehicles to stop and search. They also have names of suspected militants, but catching them is enormously difficult in a metropolitan area of more than 8 million people.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, at least 1,416 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,080 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is 39 higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Wednesday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 20; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Romania and Kazakhstan, one each.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ A U.S. soldier died Wednesday from an explosive in Baghdad.

■ Thirty Marines and one sailor died Wednesday when their helicopter crashed near Rutbah, Iraq while conducting security operations.

■ One soldier was killed Wednesday when a patrol was attacked with grenades near Dululiyah, Iraq.

■ Four Marines were killed Wednesday in Iraq's Anbar province.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department and family members:

■ Marine Lance Cpl. Tony Hernandez, 30, of Canyon Lake, Texas, died Wednesday when his helicopter crashed near Rutbah, Iraq, assigned to the 1st Marine Division, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

■ Army Sgt. Brett D. Swank, 21, Northumberland, Pa., died Monday in Baghdad, Iraq, of injuries from an explosive, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment, Fort Polk, La.

IN THE WORLD

U.S. Korea warns of rising tensions with S. Korea

BY BO-MI LIM

The Associated Press

SEOUL — North Korea on Thursday again accused South Korean ships of violating its waters, saying such acts would lead to a serious military clash between the two countries.

Over the past week, the communist country has accused South Korean warships of infiltrating its waters and Southern troops of transporting heavy weapons into the Demilitarized Zone, which has separated the two countries since the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce.

South Korean officials have dismissed those allegations, calling them propaganda.

On Thursday, the North again accused Southern warships of violating its waters.

"This is... quite a dangerous military hostile act that may give rise again to a grave military collision," North Korea's Cabinet



Two North Korean soldiers watch the south side at the truce village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized Zone that separates the two Koreas on Wednesday.

newspaper, Minju Joseon, said in an editorial carried by the state-run news agency, KCNA.

South Korea honors a sea bor-

der drawn by the United Nations at the end of the war. But North Korea disputes that border, and the rivals' navies fought deadly skirmishes in 1999 and 2002.

North Korea regularly alleges that South Korean boats have illegally entered its waters.

The claims come as Washington and its allies are struggling to resume talks on the North's nuclear weapons ambitions. Three previous rounds held in Beijing last year ended with little progress.

North Korea, however, struck a conciliatory tone last week when it allowed a South Korean police boat to conduct a rescue mission in communist waters after a cargo vessel sank there.

No peace treaty was signed at the end of the Korean War, leaving the two Koreas still technically at war.

Nearly 2 million troops are armed by the wire-fenced, mine-infested DMZ, which only rifles and other small arms are allowed.

Forum speakers put pressure on U.S., other rich nations to aid Africa

BY EDITH M. LEDERER

The Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland — African leaders, Microsoft's Bill Gates, former U.S. president Bill Clinton and even British Prime Minister Tony Blair stepped up pressure on the United States and other rich countries Thursday to reach deeper into their pockets to save the lives of millions of Africans mired in poverty.

Clinton took aim at President Bush's \$80 billion request to finance the war in Iraq for a year, telling 2,500 global leaders that "for a pittance" of that sum the United States could double its international aid and make a major contribution to saving lives and ending massive poverty in Africa.

"You want to go save 4 million lives? Give them the medicine. It's not rocket science, and it's so cheap compared to everything else all these rich countries do," Clinton said. "Anybody who says we shouldn't do this because there's corruption and incompetence should be put in a closet. ... I mean, this is ridiculous."

Meeting the U.N. goal of cutting global poverty in half by 2015 remained a top issue at the World Economic Forum's annual gathering of top business executives, politicians and social leaders. But Middle East peace, bioterrorism, oil prices and protesters shared the spotlight on Thursday.

U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney Peres said the recent Palestinian effort to move toward peace "exceeds our expectations" and he expects Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to meet the new Palestinian leader, Mahmoud Abbas, in "days, not weeks."

"I think we can move faster than we thought earlier — faster and better if nothing wrong will occur," Peres said at this ski resort in the Swiss Alps.

Abbas was to outline his new government's goals on Saturday.

Fluctuating oil prices remained a prime topic at the conference, as analysts warned that China's voracious economic expansion was demanding more capacity. But questions about whether OPEC would tighten its oil supply remained ahead of a key meeting Sunday in Vienna, Austria.

Sheik Ahmad Fahd al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti oil minister and the cartel's president, said the group would consider returning some of the oil it removed from the market in December, if needed.

The panel attracting the biggest audience Thursday featured Clinton, Blair, Gates, the presidents of South Africa and Nigeria, and U2 rock star and social activist Bono. The panel discussed whether the seven wealthiest nations and Russia — the G8 — will take action to end poverty in Africa.

Russian Holocaust survivors lament anti-semitism rise

Gathering marks Auschwitz liberation

BY MARIA DANILOVA

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Elderly Holocaust survivors, Jewish leaders and Red Army veterans gathered Thursday to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp with what they called mixed feelings of joy over the Nazi defeat but bitterness over the persistent anti-Semitism in Russia.

With a minute of silence and a song dedicated to Holocaust victims, participants paid tribute to the 1.5 million prisoners, most of them Jews, who perished in gas chambers or died of starvation and disease at the Auschwitz and Birkenau death camps.

In all, some 6 million Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

But as Jewish leaders celebrated the liberation of Auschwitz — by Soviet troops — and the victory over Nazi Germany, they lamented the rise of anti-Semitic sentiments in today's Russia.

"There are only few Auschwitz survivors still alive today — most of them didn't live to hear our lawmakers asking to ban Jewish organizations," Aron Zisman, the head of Ruf, a union of Jewish prisoners of Nazi camps, said bitterly.

Zisman was referring to a recent appeal by some 20 Russian lawmakers asking prosecutors to launch an investigation with the aim of outlawing all Jewish organizations. The lawmakers claimed that such groups were fomenting ethnic hatred and anti-Semitism and should therefore be closed.

"This means that our train leaves for Auschwitz — today and every day," said Matvei Geizer, a 64-year-old Holocaust survivor.

Geizer was 4 years old when the Red Army soldiers freed him and his family from a Jewish ghetto in Kiev, Ukraine, in March 1944.

According to various statistics, only 12,000 to 16,000 out of the ghetto's 50,000 inhabitants survived. Several hundred people were shot — the rest died of starvation and disease, Geizer said.

"We were saved by the Red Army soldiers, and although I was only 4, I can remember their faces so vividly that I would recognize them on the street," said Geizer, whose father had died in the ghetto.

He recalled his grandfather's dispute with his mother's and grandmother's protests — took him to a grave of some 300 ghetto prisoners who had been executed.

"He wanted me to see it with my own eyes and hear with my own ears — he condemned me to always remembering it," Geizer said.

He lamented the lawmakers' call for banning Jewish organizations, saying that means Russian society has failed to fully condemn the Nazi crimes. "Such things cannot be forgotten," Geizer said.

President Vladimir Putin, addressing a forum in Krakow, Poland, held as Holocaust remembrance festivities, acknowledged anti-Semitism in Russia.

"Even in our country, in Russia — which did more than any to combat fascism, for the victory over fascism, which did most to save the Jewish people — even in our country we sometimes unfortunately see manifestations of this problem and I, too, am ashamed of that," he said.

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Pastor Warren Webster

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Tuesday
 Soul Winning & Visitation 1830

Wednesday
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 Children's Church (English, Japanese) 10:45am
 Evening Service 8:00pm-9:00
 Children's Sunday School
 Youth Adults Service
 Home Fellowship Groups (every 1st & 3rd Sunday) 1:00pm
 6:00pm

TUESDAY
 Ladies Bible Study
 Ladies Night Out (2nd Tues of month)

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 "Come to the River"
 Christian Service (3rd Friday of month)

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Japan forces step into tsunami efforts

Aid groups hopeful needs will be met after U.S. pullout

BY YEOH EN-LAI
The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — Awe-struck villagers watched as two hovercraft landed on a beach Thursday in tsunami-devastated Aceh province, carrying Japanese troops in their largest overseas relief effort.

The Japanese troops will try to fill the gap left when U.S. forces scale back their relief operations. Indonesian authorities said they planned to relocate 400,000 refugees in Aceh from squalid camps to temporary homes before the end of February.

"It's critical to put all the internally displaced people in barracks, where we can serve them better rather than being in tents," said Budi Amaji, who is leading the government's relief effort.

He said the government also aims to remove all remaining corpses and complete its cleanup of the debris-filled streets of the provincial capital, Banda Aceh, by the end of next month.

Indonesia's president, meanwhile, offered autonomy to separatist rebels in Aceh province if they agree to a cease-fire in peace talks scheduled to begin Friday. A rebel leader rejected the autonomy offer, however, saying the separatists will settle for nothing less than independence.

The two Japanese military hovercraft landed in the region hardest hit by the Dec. 26 disaster that killed between 145,000 and 178,000 people and left tens of thousands of others missing across southern Asia.

The vessels, which float on



Indonesians look on as a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force hovercraft lands on a beach in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, on Thursday. Two Japanese military hovercrafts arrived in Aceh on Thursday, bringing a water purification plant and medical supplies to set in motion Japan's largest-ever overseas relief effort.

cushions of air, brought a water purification plant and medical supplies.

"I've never seen anything like it," said curious villager Muhammad Yunus, 53. Japan, which has committed nearly 1,000 troops, joins such nations as France, Germany, Australia and Malaysia who plan to keep providing relief and assistance even as the United States military plans to pull back. Aid organizations said they were optimistic that the needs would be met.

A spokeswoman for Mercy Corps said she didn't think the U.S. drawdown would hamper her organization's operations. "We've had a lot of great success in reaching places and we don't use the U.S. military to deliver aid," Kira Kay said.

Indonesia wants foreign troops

to leave the area by the end of March.

President Bush was expected to ask Congress next month for roughly \$1 billion for continued U.S. aid for tsunami victims. But a Bush administration official told a congressional foreign aid subcommittee that stricken nations desiring long-term debt relief from the United States will probably have to accept reductions in other aid in exchange.

Leading British charity Oxfam said that governments have contributed only half the \$977 million emergency aid requested by the United Nations even though they pledged \$912 million for the immediate aftermath of the disaster. The peace talks between the Indonesian government and the separatists begin Friday in Helsinki, Finland.

Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono told reporters the government has offered rebels a chance to "terminate the conflict peacefully, of course in the framework of the unity of the Republic of Indonesia and by adopting the special autonomy status."

"This is a great momentum for us to really end the conflict, unite with our brothers and to rebuild Aceh," he said.

Indonesia wants the talks to be followed by more substantive negotiations on the status of Aceh.

The Free Aceh Movement, known by the Indonesian acronym GAM, has been fighting since 1976 for independence for the resource-rich province of 4.1 million people on the northern tip of Sumatra island. A previous truce collapsed in 2003.

At the time, Indonesia's parliament approved a special autonomy package that would give the people Aceh self-government while keeping them within Indonesia, but the measure was never implemented because of the fighting.

Since assuming office 100 days ago, Yudhoyono has said he wishes to restart the peace process.

Associated Press Writers Iwan Finad, Burt Herman and Chris Brummitt in Banda Aceh, Beth Gardner in Meulaboh, Indonesia, and Tim Train in Galle, Sri Lanka, contributed to this report.

Monks add science to traditional counseling

The Associated Press

TAIKU PA, Thailand — In Thailand, a mostly Buddhist country, people suffering personal problems or tragedies — from a broken marriage to a death in the family — often turn to their temple seeking consolation through prayer and meditation, or a quiet word with their local monk.

Tapping into this tradition, some monks trained in psychology are combining their Buddhist religion with medical science to help tsunami victims.

In a country where many people believe that psychologists and mental health workers are only needed to treat the insane, the practice is turning some heads.

"We are both psychologists and monks," said Rapin Buddhassaro, one of 20 psychology students at Maha Chulalongkorn, a university for monks in Bangkok, the Thai capital, who have been sent to help tsunami victims.

"The approach we use is a mixture of Western psychology and Buddhism. We let them vent their sadness and suffering, and give counseling based on Buddhist teachings," he said.

Like the other students, Rapin was going from hut to hut in the overcrowded refugee camps to counsel tsunami survivors and keep close tabs on their recoveries.

Dr. Thaweesin Wisanuyothin, a spokesman of the Health Ministry's Department of Mental Health, said his ministry plans to help train more Buddhist monks as psychologists who can do outreach, rather than waiting for followers to come to their temples.

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International doctors shifting attention to emotional trauma

The Associated Press

MEUREUBO, Indonesia — As worries about disease outbreaks ease in the aftermath of Asia's tsunami disaster, another pressing health concern has emerged: emotional trauma in survivors.

Dr. Morten Rostrop, a Norwegian emergency doctor from aid group Medics Sans Frontiers, or Doctors Without Borders, said many of Indonesia's hundreds of thousands of survivors have complained of muscle and chest pains, digestive problems and breathing difficulties, symptoms likely caused by the strain of losing livelihoods and loved ones.

"In this setting, a minor complaint is a kind of entrance into something else which they really feel," Rostrop said.

Dr. Jack Chow, assistant director-general of the World Health

Organization, said the U.N. agency would work with Indonesia's government to improve counseling and other mental health care services for residents. Such psychotherapy is virtually unheard of in Indonesia.

Despite the efforts, few residents have had to receive professional help, he said.

Chow estimated that half of all those who survived the tsunami could suffer some emotional stress. Between 5 percent and 10 percent could suffer from severe psychological difficulties, he said.

Doctors Without Borders has been training local health workers in counseling and has sent teams to help survivors. Many therapists will talk with victims about the horrors they witnessed and how they survived. They will teach them relaxation exercises, massage techniques and other methods to ease anxiety.

IN THE STATES

Oil company to cut refinery emissions

Lawuit settlement also requires ConocoPhillips to pay \$4.5M fine

BY MARK SHERMAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — ConocoPhillips will install \$525 million in pollution controls at nine refineries and pay a \$4.5 million fine to settle a federal lawsuit alleging Clean Air Act violations, the Bush administration announced Thursday.

The settlement requires ConocoPhillips, the nation's third largest oil company, to reduce yearly emissions of nitrogen oxide by more than 10,000 tons and sulfur dioxide by more than 37,100 tons. Both can cause respiratory ailments and worsen cases of childhood asthma.

The refineries covered in the agreement among the company, the Justice Department, Environmental Protection Agency and five states, represent 10 percent of the nation's refining capacity.

The refineries are in California,

Illinois, Louisiana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington. California and Washington are not part of the settlement, Justice Department officials said.

The settlement is the 13th reached under an EPA initiative begun in 2000. EPA officials have said the earlier agreements have cut air pollution by 200,000 tons a year at 48 refineries.

The money for pollution control will be spent over eight years and is just shy of the largest settlement reached over the past four years, a \$550 million agreement with Motiva Enterprises.

In addition to the pollution controls and civil penalty, ConocoPhillips will spend another \$10 million to further reduce emissions at its refineries in the five states that are part of the settlement. The agreement was filed in U.S. District Court in Texas and still requires the approval of a federal judge.

Train crash suspect faces murder charges

BY PAUL CHAVEZ

The Associated Press

GLENDALE, Calif. — The suicidal man who authorities say caused the chain-reaction train derailment that killed 11 people and injured nearly 200 was charged with multiple counts of murder and could face the death penalty, the district attorney said Thursday.

Juan Manuel Alvarez, 25, left his sport utility vehicle on a railroad track Wednesday after changing his mind about committing suicide, authorities said. He was held without bail at a hospital until ward after apparently slitting his own wrists and stabbing himself in the chest.

The last person reported missing was accounted for Thursday and firefighters ended recovery efforts. All but one of the dead had been identified.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley said prosecutors filed charges late Wednesday for 10 counts of murder with so-called special circumstances of committing murder through a train derailment. Under state law, the allegation makes Alvarez eligible for the death penalty. Cooley said the complaint would be amended to add another count to refer to the 11th victim, found in the wreckage Wednesday night.

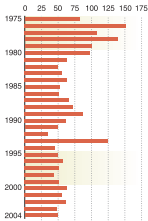
Prosecutors were evaluating Alvarez's mental state in regard to the special circumstance allegations, but Cooley said it was no defense to the charges.

An arraignment is planned for Thursday afternoon but could be delayed depending on Alvarez's medical condition.

Deadly crossings

An aborted suicide attempt in Glendale, Calif., set off the nation's deadliest rail disaster in nearly six years, killing 11 and injuring nearly 200. Historically, most U.S. train casualties are caused by highway and rail collisions.

Train-related fatalities in the United States



SOURCE: Federal Railroad Administration

AP

Separately, a suicidal man who parked his sport utility vehicle on railroad tracks in Orange County was arrested early Thursday, said Irvine police Cmdr. Dave Freedland, declining to say if it was a copycat situation. The man drove off when police spotted him and, after a chase, a dispatcher called him out of suicide during a cell phone call.



Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, left, shakes hands with State Department employees on Thursday in Washington. Rice took over Thursday as America's 66th secretary of state, and addressed her employees in the lobby of the State building.

AP

Rice gets warm welcome

New secretary of state starts work after confirmation

BY BARRY SCHWEID

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Declaring "history is calling us," Condoleezza Rice took over Thursday as America's 66th secretary of state to confront an agenda laden with difficult and potentially explosive foreign policy problems.

At the top is a grinding war in Iraq that has taken the lives of more than 1,400 U.S. troops.

But Rice exuded confidence as she entered the State Department, telling employees that "it's great to be here," and declaring that "democracy will take hold" around the world as it did in Germany and Japan after World War II.

At the end of next week, Rice is expected to undertake her first overseas venture as secretary of state, going to Europe, the Middle East and possibly other regions.

Among her goals are mending relations with U.S. allies in Europe and assessing prospects for Arab-Israeli negotiations.

Known during her four years as President Bush's national security assistant as remote and reserved, Rice pleased hundreds of employees crammed into a

State Department lobby with the declaration that her door will be open to the public.

Echoing Bush's inaugural speech, Rice promised, "America will stand for freedom and for liberty."

She started her first day on the job with telephone calls to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Italian Foreign Minister Gianfranco Fini and other foreign officials.

She planned to attend an Iraq meeting at the White House and another one at the State Department on the tsunami disaster in Asia.

Rice is about a week behind schedule, delayed by critical Democratic senators who delayed confirmation. The Senate voted 85-13 to confirm her Wednesday.

Separately:

■ Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee advanced Alberto Gonzales' attorney general nomination on a partyline, 10-8 vote, sending it to the full Senate, where Republicans were expected to use their 55-44 advantage to confirm him there next week at the earliest.

■ Jim Nicholson and Michael Leavitt won confirmation as the new secretaries of veterans affairs and health and human services, respectively.

Homeland security system revamped

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Bush administration officials Wednesday unveiled a new personnel system for the Department of Homeland Security that will dramatically change the way workers are paid, promoted, deployed and disciplined — and soon the White House will ask Congress to grant all federal agencies similar authority to rewrite civil service rules governing their employees.

The new system will replace the half-century-old General Schedule, with its familiar 15 pay grades and raises tied to time in a

job, and install one that more directly ties pay to occupation and annual performance evaluations, officials said. The new system has taken two years to develop and will require at least four more to implement, they said.

Under the new plan, employees would be grouped into eight to 12 clusters based on occupation. Salary ranges will be based, in part, on geographic location and annual market surveys by a new compensation committee. Within each occupational cluster, workers will be assigned to one of four salary ranges, or "pay bands," based on their skill level and experience.

Getting a raise or promotion will depend on receiving a satisfactory performance rating from one's supervisor.

The White House will propose legislation within a month to allow all agencies to revamp their personnel systems in a similar way, said Clay Johnson II, deputy director for management at the Office of Management and Budget.

Federal employee union leaders, however, immediately denounced the new DHS system and any plans to expand it government wide. They said the system would undermine the morale of homeland security employees and make it harder to attract and keep talented workers.

Auto worker kills boss

TOLEDO, Ohio — An auto worker wired a shotgun to his body and burst into a Jeep assembly plant, killing a supervisor and wounding two other employees before killing himself.

The alleged gunman, Myles Meyers, had met with plant offi-

cials to talk about a problem with his work the day before his fatal spree Wednesday at a Jeep Liberty Plant, authorities said.

After entering the plant at about 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Meyers had pointed the gun at a woman in the plant's body shop office and ordered her to summon three other people.

She summoned one of the three men, Michael Toney, who was shot and wounded. Supervisor Roy Thacker, who was on the list of three, was killed after he went to the office on his own, while a third man who was not on the list, Paul Medlen, was wounded later, authorities said.

From The Associated Press



Smoke seeps from one of the buildings Wednesday at the Wilbur-Ellis Co. warehouse in Grandview, Wash. A burning warehouse containing farm chemicals sent contaminated smoke into the foggy air above Grandview, prompting the evacuation of nearby homes and businesses.

Chemical fumes from fire prompt evacuation in Wash. state town

BY SHANNON DININNY
The Associated Press

GRANDVIEW, Wash. — Officials evacuated 100 homes and closed a 13-mile stretch of highway after a building used to store farm chemicals caught fire, filling the air with contaminated smoke.

A half dozen people complained of skin irritation or respiratory distress and sought treatment at a nearby hospital, said Lt. Jim Keightley, State Patrol spokesman.

Authorities evacuated a half mile area around the Wilbur-Ellis Co. plant that included about 100 homes — roughly 400 people, he said.

"The chemicals are an irritant and some of them are toxic," according to Ken Cowdrey, Wilbur-Ellis' head of safety in Yakima.

However, he said they did not include explosive chlorine, ammonium nitrate or anhydrous ammonia.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known.

A hazardous materials team set up air monitors inside and outside the building as the fire continued to smolder Wednesday night.

A 13-mile stretch of Interstate 82 between Sunnyside and Prosser was closed, and officials were unsure when it would reopen.

The 40-by-80-foot building stores agricultural chemicals and fertilizers.

The site is on the outskirts of Grandview, a town of roughly 8,500 people about 40 miles south-east of Yakima.

Students were kept inside Wednesday with their schools' ventilation systems shut down to keep out the smoke.

Mayor Norm Childress said Grandview schools would be closed Thursday.

Wilbur Ellis, based in San Francisco, is an international marketer and distributor of agricultural and industrial products.

In Boston, snowiest month ever

BY BOB SALSBERG
The Associated Press

BOSTON — More than 5 more inches of snow fell on Boston by Thursday morning, putting a fresh coat on the leavings of last weekend's blizzard and making January the city's snowiest on record.

Schools canceled classes yet again, and Gov. Mitt Romney asked President Bush to declare a federal emergency in the eastern half of the state, which would make the area eligible for extra aid.

The 5.4 inches of new snow recorded at Logan Airport before the storm let up Thursday morning came only days after the blizzard that dumped more than 3 feet of snow.

It brought the airport's January total to 43.1 inches of snow, more than in any month since the National Weather Service began keeping records for the city in 1892. The previous record of 41.6 inches was set in February 2003.

Forty miles west, Worcester set a new January record, with 51 total inches, topping the previous record of 46.8 inches in 1897.

That city's snowiest month ever came in February 1893, when 55 inches fell.

Boston's public school students had only one day of class this week.

After canceling classes Monday and Tuesday, the superintendent closed schools Wednesday, prompting complaints from parents who thought the snow-clogged streets and sidewalks were still too dangerous for children.

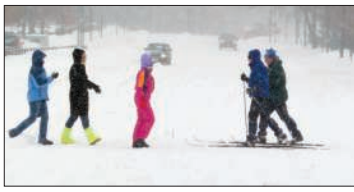
Classes were canceled for the rest of the week, and other districts made the same decision.

"I was convinced it was safe," Boston Superintendent Thomas Payzant said.

"I've been doing this for a lot of years. ... I take the hit when I guess wrong."

In western Massachusetts, 55-year-old Maurice DuBois made extra money by shoveling the sidewalk in front of some Main Street businesses in Northampton.

"It is just another winter to me," said DuBois, a New England native who also lived in Alaska. "But the older you get, the more you dislike it. It's hard on the body."



People cross snow-covered streets in Boston on Sunday. A blizzard dumped as much as 2 feet of snow on Massachusetts.

Cold-hearted lesson

Officials recall woes of Blizzard of '78

BY BROOKE DONALD
The Associated Press

CRANSTON, R.I. — Nearly everyone has a memory from the Blizzard of '78, which crippled New England for more than a week.

For Gov. Don Carcieri, it's the six hours he snaked his way home through whiteout conditions on Interstate 95, getting out to push his Volkswagen Beetle every few feet.

"It was a horrendous situation," he said Monday, as the state continued to dig out of a weekend storm forecasters compared to the infamous one of 27 years ago.

"You learn from experience," Carcieri continued. "We've been there, done that. We didn't want to do it again."

The snowfall totals aren't that far off from the Blizzard of '05 and the Blizzard of '78. In some parts of Southern New England, the inches on the ground from this year's storm actually surpassed those in 1978.

But unlike 27 years ago, damage is limited and the number of deaths — at least two in Massachusetts, two in Connecticut and none in Rhode Island — are far fewer. The reasons are many, officials said, including the timing of the storm on a weekend and even the New England Patriots, whose appearance Sunday in the AFC Championship sport kept many people home.

Perhaps most important was the memory of 1978.

"It's lessons learned," said Maj.

Gen. Reginald Centracchio, director of the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency.

This year's blizzard dumped close to two feet of snow in Providence and Boston and more than three feet in other areas.

Carcieri and Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney declared states of emergency. Romney asked nonessential state workers in the eastern part of the state not to come to work. Carcieri closed all state and municipal offices Monday. Schools were also closed.

Those measures, forecasters said, enabled the states to be more aggressive in their clean up efforts, as fewer resources had to be devoted to rescue and tow operations.

"If you look at the magnitude of this storm, we're in relatively good shape this quickly after it," said Peter Jurgens, spokesman for the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency. "When you consider historically the storms we've had, we'd go three or four days after the storm and there were still some major problems."

"One lesson we learned from '78 is that if the forecast is bad, send them home," said former Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis.

In 1978, the storm hit as residents left work. Some areas in southeastern Massachusetts and northern Rhode Island saw more than 50 inches of snow. More than 100 people were killed, thousands were stranded in their cars on the highways and property damage ran up to nearly \$1 billion.

As Fla. city heals, it calls for reforms in response to abduction

BY MITCH STACY
The Associated Press

SARASOTA, Fla. — What happened to 11-year-old Carlie Brucia was every parent's worst nightmare. But in Carlie's case, the world got to watch.

A surveillance camera behind a car wash captured images of the blond sixth-grader apparently being abducted by a man in a mechanic's uniform who walked up and grabbed her arm as she walked home from a friend's house on Super Bowl Sunday last year. Her body was found stashed among some brush on the grounds of a nearby church five days later.

People in a city known more for its lovely weather and wintering snowbirds came together in a series of crowded public services as the grief over Carlie's death rippled through the community.

Nearly one year later, the healing continued, as does an effort to come down harder on probation violators such as Joseph P. Smith, the unemployed mechanic charged in the slaying.

"You might push it out of your mind, but you don't forget," said Mary Alice Jackson, an attorney who stepped forward to handle money donated to a fund on Carlie's behalf. "It heightens the awareness of how vulnerable we are."

As for Carlie's mother, Susan Schorpen, she said she would participate in a Feb. 5 public rally in Sarasota stressing child abduction awareness, but "as for (Feb.) 1st, I'd just when I left alone."

When the images of Carlie's abduction began airing again and again on news broadcasts, acquaintances of an unemployed mechanic named Joseph P. Smith started calling authorities to say he looked like the man on the video who walked up and pulled Carlie away.

Smith was arrested and charged with her slaying. News that he had recently violated probation prompted an outcry among those who felt he should have been in jail,

and it triggered a continuing effort among state officials to come down harder on people like Smith, who was a frequent probation violator.

According to court records, Smith told his brother during a jailhouse visit where police could find Carlie's body. Smith is charged with first-degree murder, kidnapping and sexual battery.

His trial is scheduled for Nov. 7, and prosecutors say they will seek the death penalty if he's convicted.

State officials and Carlie's family say they hope a legacy of the little girl's killing will be the state's effort to tighten probation restrictions.

Study: Syphilis rates move in cycles

BY MATT CRENSON
The Associated Press

A recent rise in syphilis rates in the United States is probably due to natural cycles rather than an increase in unsafe sex or other behaviors, according to a new study.

The finding is encouraging to public health authorities who have worried that increasing syphilis infection, especially among gay and bisexual men, is a sign that people at high risk for HIV have grown complacent about practicing safe sex.

Syphilis has been on the rise in the United States since 2000, when the incidence of the disease was at its lowest in six decades.

In 2003, the most recent year for which data are available, 7,177 cases were reported, compared with 5,979 in 2000.

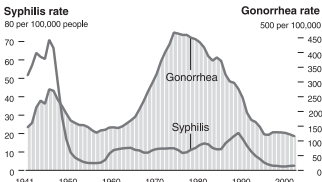
"One would expect for the next few years for syphilis incidence to continue to rise," said Nicholas C. Grassly, one of the study's authors.

Similar jumps in syphilis incidence have been observed in the past. When syphilis rates peaked in the early 1970s, some researchers blamed the sexual revolution, when infections rose again a decade later, they were attributed to the spread of crack cocaine.

Grassly and his colleagues argue in this week's issue of the journal *Nature* that syphilis infection

Syphilis rates affected by immunity

Gonorrhea and syphilis are both spread in the same way, yet the rate of infections differ. People who recover from syphilis can remain immune for years, whereas gonorrhea can return immediately.



SOURCES: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; *Nature*

AP

follows a natural cycle that peaks at eight- to 11-year intervals. Though sexual behavior certainly influences the overall number of people infected, the researchers concluded, those regular ups and downs are an intrinsic property of the disease itself.

The researchers discovered the oscillating pattern by examining syphilis infection trends in 68 U.S. cities over the past 50 years.

But when they looked at the pattern of gonorrhea infection over the same period, the pattern was absent. Gonorrhea rates tended to

rise over the second half of the 20th century, then fell gradually beginning around 1980.

Because the diseases spread the same way, if changes in sexual behavior had caused the oscillating pattern in syphilis they should have created a similar pattern in gonorrhea. Yet gonorrhea rates show a steady rise from the 1950s through the 1970s, followed by a steady fall.

"You don't see these repeated, regular epidemics," said Grassly, an epidemiologist at Imperial College in London. He wrote the Na-

tural paper with Christophe Fraser and Geoffrey P. Garnett, also of Imperial College.

The key to the difference between syphilis and gonorrhea is immunity. Unlike those who catch gonorrhea, people who recover from syphilis can resist re-infection for some time afterward. That means when the disease sweeps through a city, it leaves a relatively immune population in its wake and infection rates fall.

But as the population gradually evolves, the proportion of susceptible individuals rises and so do infection rates. Using a computer model, Grassly and his colleagues showed that the time from one peak to the next should be about a decade.

"It's a kind of neat piece of detective work," said Bryan Grenfell, a biologist at Pennsylvania State University who studies childhood infectious diseases.

Juvenile diabetes study

ALBANY, New York — For decades, people with so-called juvenile diabetes have been told that controlling their blood sugar was all they could do to prevent nerve damage that can lead to the amputation of a foot or leg.

But a large new British study suggests they should follow the same advice given to other diabetics: Don't smoke, and watch your weight and blood pressure.

These heart disease risk factors were almost as important as blood-sugar levels in predicting which diabetics would develop nerve problems.

In light of the findings, diabetes experts said cholesterol-lowering statin drugs and other heart disease treatments should be studied to see if they can help stave off or slow the progression of nerve damage in diabetics.

Of the 18 million Americans who have diabetes, about 5 percent to 10 percent have Type 1, sometimes called juvenile diabetes, though it can strike at any age.

From The Associated Press

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Survivor looks to heal before healing again

BY MICHELLE BOORSTEIN

The Washington Post

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Washington — busy and brightly lit as he flew over it the night of Jan. 10 — became a suddenly dark, lonely place for flight nurse Jonathan Godfrey after his medevac helicopter crashed into the Potomac River, stranding him in 39-degree water where he clung to a piece of the aircraft's skeleton and watched cars pass on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

"It was surreal," Godfrey said in his first public comments since the AirEvac helicopter went down on its way back to its base in Stafford County, killing the other two crew members. "For a few minutes, it looked like the world just kept going on, and I was out in the wilderness."

Then Godfrey started to see flashing blue lights on the bridge.

Then red lights. "There was an element of, 'Oh, yes, someone does know that I am here, and I am down.' When a rescue helicopter appeared, he tried to attract the spotlight with a small penlight.

Medevac nurse experiences flip side of rescue when his chopper crashes into the Potomac

As federal officials continued to investigate the crash, Godfrey, 36, of Chesapeake Beach, Md., held a small news conference Wednesday to say that he is still coming to grips with what happened — and that "I absolutely do not know" why it happened.

Rescue workers and a preliminary report by the National Transportation Safety Board have quoted Godfrey as saying he thought the helicopter hit something. The report added that Godfrey recalled seeing a passing jet before the crash and wondering whether its wake turbulence — which whips off the tail, then sinks and dissipates — would cause trouble for the helicopter.

"I'm going to let the NTSB's [final] report stand on its own and trust what they come up with," he said.

Torn from the helicopter and still in his seat, Godfrey recalled waking up "on the

bottom of the river" in five to seven feet of water, undoing his seat belt and making his way to the surface. He spent five days in the hospital for treatment of broken ribs, sternum and humerus, the bone that extends from the shoulder to the elbow.

The strap burn where his helmet tore off during the crash has healed, but the points of the metal brace that holds his shoulder steady are visible through his shirt. He is still taking some pain medication as he recuperates at home with his wife, Debbie, and three children.

"I want to climb back into a helicopter with all my heart. But I need to heal, go through physical therapy and spend a lot of time talking with my wife," he said.

At the time of the crash, the Texas-born Godfrey had been working for nine months with the 12-person AirEvac team at

Stafford Regional Airport. The company is part of Denver-based Air Methods Corp., the country's largest operator of air ambulances. Before that, he worked primarily in hospitals, including Mary Washington Hospital in Fredericksburg and Children's Hospital in Washington.

At AirEvac, he worked closely with the other two people in the helicopter: paramedic Nicole Kiehl, 29, of Henrico County and pilot Joseph E. Schneider III, 56, of Sterling, who had been flying since the Vietnam War. They had just dropped off a cardiac patient at Washington Hospital Center, and Godfrey said his last memory aboard the helicopter was discussing with Kiehl the pluses and minuses of two pain medications.

Now, Godfrey said, he has "visited both sides" of the emergency medical system, having been pulled from the river by the Alexandria Fire Department's Marine Operations Team. "To those of us who have been able to stare at your faces and hold your hand," he said, his face flushing as he seemed to speak to others in his line of work, "you are heroes."



AP photos

Above: Michael Howden appears before his sex change. Michael married a woman before undergoing a sex change which transformed them into a same-sex couple, despite a ban on such unions in 40 states, including New Hampshire.

Right: Judi, left, and Mikayla Howden pose at their home in Concord, N.H. The two married nearly four years ago.



Sex change blurs marital status

BY ERIK STETSON

The Associated Press

CONCORD, New Hampshire — Judi Howden went into her marriage knowing full well that one day her husband might become her wife.

The couple stayed together — even as Howden's husband, Michael, underwent a sex-change operation that transformed him into Mikayla. That surgery also landed them in a murky area where gender and law collide.

Their marriage — once between a man and a woman — is now between a woman and a woman, despite a ban on such unions in 40 states, including New Hampshire.

Their experience highlights a legal Catch-22. While states can

either recognize or refuse to recognize someone's new gender following a sex change, either decision inescapably permits some form of same-sex marriage.

"I have no answer to it," said state congressman Dan Ise, a Republican who supports the state's same-sex marriage ban. "We have ventured where angels fear to tread."

The federal government must decide if Mikayla Howden, a U.S. citizen born overseas, can update her birth certificate. It hasn't yet ruled, and Shannon Minter, of the National Center for Lesbian Rights in California, said the Bush administration has not been as accommodating as earlier administrations.

According to the center, four states don't permit gender up-

dates: Tennessee, Ohio, Kansas and Texas. About half of the remaining states do. A firm policy hasn't been legally well established in the remaining states, including New Hampshire, said Minter, the center's legal director.

"Whether or not society will acknowledge our marriage, I think, is my biggest fear," Judi Howden said. "That someday, someone may pass legislation that says, 'Because you are now two females, you are no longer married.' For anyone to say that they have the right to break up a family, I don't think is right."

The Howdens' marriage clearly was legal when it began, and same-sex marriage bans cannot automatically invalidate it, Minter said, just as states don't automatically annul marriages for adultery or abuse.

Residents of Ga. town spruce up pitiful image

BY ELLIOTT MINOR

The Associated Press

PITTS, Ga. — Years of neglect left the once-thriving business district of this rural community looking like, well, the pits.

Now residents want to turn Pitts into a pit stop featuring antiques, fine arts, pottery and Southern barbecue for travelers from Interstate 75, which runs 15 miles to the west through Cordele. They also want to make it a stop for an excursion train that occasionally runs from Cordele to Savannah.

"We actually have people who stop ... and take their pictures with the city limits sign," said Sandy Guest, mayor of the town of 300. "I guess it's so they can tell their friends they have been through the pits."

Local residents face a daunting challenge in getting people to stop in the city for more than a laugh.

The roof on the town's small movie house has collapsed and now vines and weeds grow where patrons once watched "Gone With the Wind" and Roy Rogers. The rusty pumps at King's Garage stopped working back when regular gasoline cost only 61.9 cents a gallon.

The outdoor staircase leading to second-floor offices at King's Mercantile Co., a two-story brick structure built in 1904, has rotted away.

Decades of rust and not have taken a similar toll on other buildings in Pitts' two-block downtown, where farmers and their families used to arrive in mule-drawn wagons on Saturdays to buy supplies and borrow money to plant crops.

But now, the downtown is showing signs of life once again. On one corner, 73-year-old Emery Mathews is at work with his skill saw and chalk line, converting a service station into a flower shop.

Jasie Guest, the mayor's father-in-law, has purchased the mercantile building and plans to turn it into a general store.



AP

Above: Years of neglect, the once-thriving downtown in Pitts, Ga., is a virtual ghost town with dilapidated century-old buildings. Residents plan to restore the buildings and hope to draw travelers from nearby Interstate 75.

Delano Brazier, a potter who returned to his birthplace after his retiring from teaching at Valdosta State University, has already transformed a portion of his father's old general store into a pottery shop. He plans to sell antiques in the building next door. He's purchased two buildings across the street for an art gallery and gardening store and he wants to move the town's old railroad depot back to town from his farm.

There are also plans to open a cabinet shop specializing in old-style furniture and a barbecue restaurant.

Brazier, like others in town, envisions a new life for Pitts as a destination for travelers looking for a quiet, small town visit.

"It'd be a break from the interstate where you can see some of the state of Georgia," he said.

Guest said people have been talking about revitalizing the downtown for years, but it wasn't until Brazier began work that others joined in.

FACES

Snoops get celebrity restraining order

Oscar-winning actress Nicole Kidman has asked a court to issue a restraining order against two Sydney photographers, their lawyer said.



Kidman

Roland Day said his client, Jamie Fawcett, and another photographer he represents had been served papers saying Kidman's application would be heard in Waverly Local Court. Day wouldn't name the other photographer.

Police officers were called to Kidman's home after an electronic listening device was found near a security vehicle that was monitoring her mansion from the street.

The bug was apparently discovered when security officers searched the grounds in preparation

for Kidman's return to film her new movie, "Eucalyptus."

It wasn't immediately clear whether Kidman's application for a restraining order was related to that incident. "Ms. Kidman appears to be trying to control how the media covers her personal and public life," Day said.

He said his clients were merely doing their jobs and that granting Kidman's request would "have the dangerous consequence of encouraging anyone under the scrutiny of the media to do the same thing."

Rowling announces name of baby

J.K. Rowling, creator of the "Harry Potter" boy-wizard fantasy book series, has named her new baby daughter Mackenzie.

The 39-year-old British author gave birth to her third child at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. In a note posted on her Web site, Rowling wrote: "Her name is Mackenzie Murray (middle names Jean Rowling) and she is ridiculously beautiful, though I suppose I might be biased."

Rowling and her husband, Dr. Neil Murray, said they are "absolutely delighted" with their new arrival. The couple have a 22-month-old son, David, and Rowling has an 11-year-old daughter, Jessica, from a previous marriage.

"Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," the much-anticipated sixth book in the series, will be published on July 16.

Actor not present for knife attack

A security guard at the London theater where Christian Slater had been performing was involved in a knife attack, a spokesman for Slater's play said.

Slater had already left the West End theater when the attack occurred, said Tom Coupe, a spokesman for "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," which ended its successful five-month run. The theater security guard wasn't injured, Coupe said.

The 35-year-old actor "wasn't nearby, he didn't see this person [the attacker]. He had already left the theater," Coupe said.

"Christian wasn't directly involved," Anna Arthur, Slater's publicist, said. "It's something that happened in the streets outside, there in the West End. It involved the security guards but not Christian."

First 'Survivor' winner arraigned

Richard Hatch, the first winner of the hit CBS reality show "Survivor," was arraigned in federal court on charges that he didn't pay taxes on his \$1 million prize.

Hatch, a resident of Newport, didn't enter a plea, but told U.S. Magistrate Judge Lincoln Almond that he understood the charges, and waived his right to a grand jury.

Almond released Hatch on \$50,000 bond, which he posted following the hearing.

Federal prosecutors charge that Hatch, 43, filed fake 2000 and 2001 tax returns, omitting his income from the show, as well as another \$321,000 he was paid by a Boston radio station.

The charges carry a maximum five years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine for each charge.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



ABACA PRESS/ART

Bobby McFerrin, second from left, his wife Debbie McFerrin, left, and their children attend a show in New York City on Nov. 15. McFerrin doesn't hate his most popular song — you know the one — but he won't perform it.

The disappearance of 'Don't worry, be happy'

He's pretty happy, but you aren't going to hear Bobby McFerrin's most famous song anytime soon — at least not from him

BY BRAD BARNES

Knight Ridder Newspapers

Bobby McFerrin does not perform his most famous song in concert.

But to quote that song: Don't worry, be happy. His shows are a free-form amalgam of jazz singing, improvised voice work and audience participation. And, McFerrin hopes, they're lots of fun.

"I'd say 90 percent of the audiences might be a little disappointed [I didn't play the song]," he says, "but hopefully they've had so much fun between, you know, the first number and the last that they're OK."

"Every once in a while someone will say, 'How come you didn't do "Don't Worry, Be Happy"?' But they're still asking for my autograph," he says.

"They're still taking pictures and we're all having a good time."

The infectious melody of "Don't Worry, Be Happy" made it a No. 1 smash in 1988, with part of the charm coming from its novelty. Bobby McFerrin's voice provided 12 tracks of hums, bob-bops and doo-doots in lieu of any instrumental support.

But he has a love-hate relationship with the piece. Its success made McFerrin a household name. But it also defined the man — a jazz artist and the son of two classical vocalists — as a pop singer in the public's mind.

"I don't regret its success at all," McFerrin says. "It's still working for me, my goodness, after all these years. It's still out there; people still talk about it. Companies use it for commercials or whatever. It's still working."

Still, he hasn't performed the song in 17 years. Yet his Web site embraces it, with playful links like "Don't Worry,

Be Bobby," and a collection of press quotes calling the man a one-hit wonder.

For the most part, critics have embraced McFerrin as a true innovator, unlike any vocalist before. That distinction might have come partly from his self-imposed exile from other jazz singers.

"In the beginning, I purposely stayed away from listening to singers for two years," he says. "I didn't want to, like, cop someone's ticks, knowing how impressionable I am. I was afraid of doing such a diligent search in trying to find the voice that I would end up copying that voice, whoever it was. So I actually made myself take a two-year fast from jazz singers."

"Once I got really comfortable with my technique, and I was beginning to understand who I was, I started listening to others," says McFerrin, now 54.

(He doesn't remember who he broke his fast with. "That was a long, long time ago," he says. "It could've been Al Jarreau, could've been Jon Hendricks.")

In keeping with that spirit of innovation, he starts every solo show by performing a song even he doesn't know.

He improvises.

"I do the hardest thing first, the scariest thing first, which is to go out there without any ideas and just open my mouth and start singing. And whatever it is, is what it is. It's never a tune that anyone knows. It's never an identifiable piece," he says. "It's always something that's made up on the spot."

That may be 25 minutes of the show, or it might be 25 minutes. And after that, he draws in the spectators to help with the performance.

"Some audiences are very conservative. They're not used to being told to sing with me," he says. "But I've never, never, never, ever failed to get an audience to sing."

"I don't regret its success at all. It's still working for me, my goodness, after all these years. It's still out there; people still talk about it."

Bobby McFerrin

Musician



Slater

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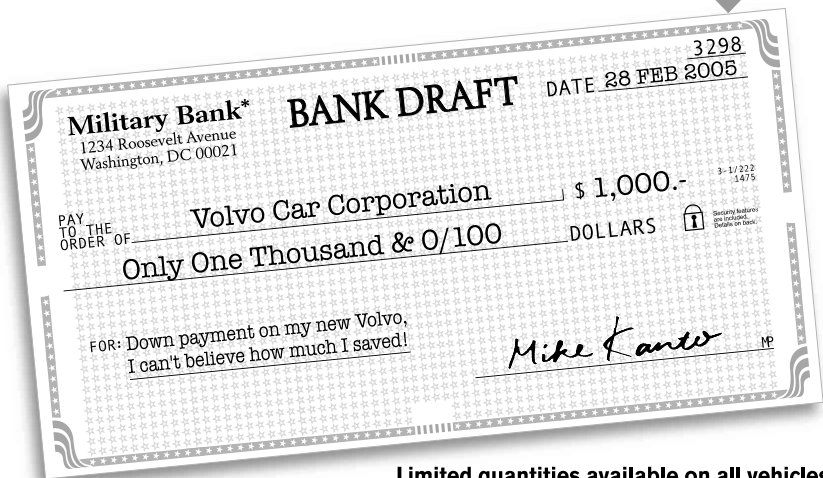
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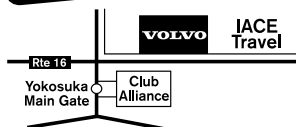
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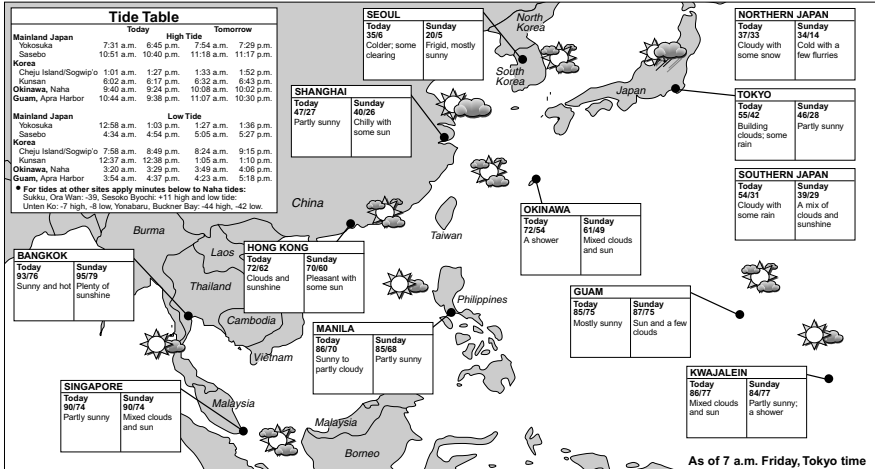
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The Pacific Forecast

AccuWeather.com

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Extended Forecasts

TOKYO

Monday: Partly sunny, high 41, low 28.
 Tuesday: Mostly sunny, high 39, low 26.

KADENA

Monday: Showers, high 59, low 50.
 Tuesday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 58, low 45.

SEoul

Monday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 19, low -1.
 Tuesday: Mostly cloudy, high 18, low 1.

MANILA

Monday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 86, low 69.
 Tuesday: Partly sunny, high 86, low 69.

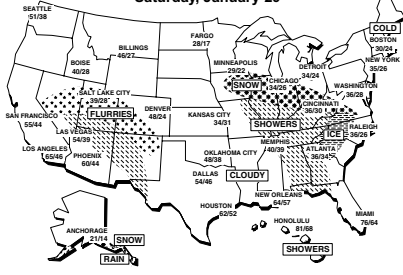
HAGATNA

Monday: Mostly sunny, high 86, low 75.
 Tuesday: Partly sunny, high 85, low 74.

Thursday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	48/30	Los Angeles	64/50
Anchorage	36/30	Little Rock	43/31
Asheville	38/15	Louisville	35/20
Baltimore	24/8	Miami	79/62
Birmingham	55/31	Milwaukee	22/8
Bismarck	30/24	Nashville	43/24
Boise	44/32	New York	19/5
Boston	15/0	Omaha	29/22
Brownsville	74/57	Orlando	76/56
Buffalo	12/0	Philadelphia	22/6
Burlington	21/12	Phoenix	64/49
Charleston, SC	56/29	Pittsburgh	18/2
Charlotte	47/20	Portland, OR	54/40
Cleveland	18/6	Portland, ME	14/4
Columbus, OH	22/4	Salt Lake City	41/31
El Paso	58/40	St. Louis	35/23
Hartford	14/3	San Antonio	55/44
Helena	40/22	San Diego	63/52
Indianapolis	25/8	San Juan	85/72
Jacksonville	64/46	Tampa	75/67
Kansas City	32/22	Tulsa	43/30
		Washington	27/14
		Wichita	37/28

Saturday, January 29



U.S. Extended Forecast

The interaction of a storm system moving northward from the Gulf of Mexico with a cold high pressure area in the mid-Atlantic region will create the potential for an ice storm Saturday from northern Alabama to central South Carolina and northward into the Tennessee Valley. The system will also spread rain across the rest of the Southeast, but the area of high pressure will keep the Northeast dry and chilly. A bit of snow and flurries will develop over the northern Plains and Midwest. Meanwhile, as rain and snow showers accompany a storm system in the Four Corners region, showers across the West Coast will taper off. A bit of ice is possible in the southern mid-Atlantic region Sunday.

Saturday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	93/76	Iwakuni	53/33
Beijing	27/18	Kadena AB	72/54
Camp Casey	34/6	Kunsan AB	38/16
Christchurch	76/55	Kwajalein	86/77
Diego Garcia	86/77	Manila	85/67
Hagatna	85/75	Masawa AB	45/28
Hanoi	81/67	Osan	35/7
Hong Kong	72/62	Perth	86/67
Honolulu	81/68	Pusan	46/20
		Sasebo NB	55/32
		Sapporo	37/33
		Seoul	30/6
		Shanghai	47/27
		Singapore	90/74
		Sydney	85/67
		Taipei	43/17
		Taegu	71/52
		Tokyo	55/42

Saturday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Acapulco	87/70	Budapest	27/14	Kabul	37/12
Athens	56/39	Buenos Aires	90/66	Kiev	19/16
Auckland	79/61	Cairo	88/65	New Delhi	67/40
Baghdad	68/48	Cancun	80/66	Oslo	35/29
Barbados	87/69	Cape Town	77/56	Paris	36/23
Barcelona	40/22	Geneva	23/15	Rio de Janeiro	74/63
Berlin	30/18	Islamabad	53/39	Rome	37/27
Bermuda	58/50	Jerusalem	76/57	St. Petersburg	19/10
Brussels	35/26	Johannesburg	84/59	Stockholm	25/23
		Moscow	16/8	Warsaw	16/7



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Cop faces discipline

CO DENVER — Police Sgt. Michael Karasek will be disciplined for threatening to arrest a woman for displaying on her truck a profane bumper sticker about President Bush, Police Chief Gerry Whitman said.

Shasta Bates, 26, was confronted by a man while standing in a UPS store. The man told her he was upset by her bumper sticker.

The man then went outside and flagged down Karasek, who was working off-duty in uniform at the shopping center.

Bates, three UPS employees and a Rocky Mountain News reporter who happened to be there all say that the officer threatened to arrest the woman if she didn't remove the bumper sticker from her truck.

Karasek told investigators that he did threaten the woman with arrest, but at the time he thought he was following the law, a police source said. He realized shortly after the confrontation that he was wrong, the source said.

Rethinking Washington

MD BALTIMORE — Researchers hoping to dispel George Washington's image as a stiff-jawed, boring old man are taking a bite out of history through a high-tech study of his famous false teeth.

The researchers were in Baltimore to perform laser scans on a set of Washington's dentures at the National Museum of Dentistry — dentures, they say, that were not made of wood as commonly believed.

Scientists and historians plan to use the information to help create new, expressive, life-sized figures of plaster and wax to show aspects of the 6-foot-3 Washington's personality they consider underappreciated.

"People know that Washington was great, but many people think he was boring and nothing could be further from the truth," said James C. Rees, executive director of the Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens, Washington's home in Northern Virginia.

Great water levels

MI TRAVERSE CITY — The water levels in the Great Lakes system have risen as much as 16 inches this winter from one year ago, bringing hope for next summer to the region's boaters and beach visitors.

According to the latest U.S. Army Corps of Engineers figures, Lake St. Clair's water level was 16 inches above the winter 2004 level and 4 inches above its long-term average. The other lakes reported 7- to 15-inch increases.

High water translates to cash for the shipping industry, where higher water means more cargo and bigger profits. A single inch of water allows a 1,000-foot freighter to carry 270 additional tons of goods, according to the Cleveland-based Lake Carriers' Association.

Light rail funded

AZ PHOENIX — Saying the nation's sixth-largest city is "strangling on its congestion," the country's top transit official signed



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

an agreement to free \$587 million in federal money to help sprawling Phoenix build a light rail system.

For Phoenix to "not plan ahead on something that is not focused on the automobile would be foolhardy," Federal Transit Administrator Jennifer Dorn said after signing the agreement with the mayors of Phoenix, Tempe, Mesa and Glendale.

Cars line up for blocks at some freeway onramps during peak hours, and it can easily take more than an hour for motorists to get to the outskirts from downtown during rush hour. With light rail, it will take about 20 minutes to get from downtown to Tempe and about the same time to get to north Phoenix.

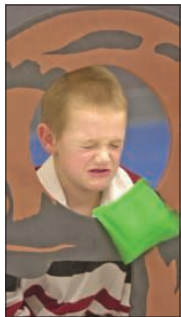
Besides easing traffic problems, Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon said light rail will create 1,600 full-time jobs.

Hearings on shrimping

LA ABBEVILLE — Public hearings are set for February to discuss capping the number of shrimp boats operating in federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico.

New rules tentatively adopted by the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council would limit the shrimp fleet for the next decade at about 2,800 boats — those operating with federal permits at the end of 2003.

After the council makes its final decision following the public hearings, the proposal would be passed



Doesn't look like fun

Brougham Elementary third-grader Nick Jones takes a beanbag to the forehead after he stuck his head in a bull's eye during a family fun night in Olathe, Kan.

on to the National Marine Fisheries Service for one last round of consideration.

Fatal accident

VT BARTON — A Lowell teenager was killed over the weekend after a snowmobile accident on Crystal Lake.

Vermont State Police later cited the boy's father and uncle on suspicion of snowmobiling while intoxicated.

The crash happened as Randy Langmaid, 37, and his 16-year-old son, Shane, were snowmobiling with Randy Langmaid's 27-year-old brother, Jonathan, according to a news release from Vermont State Police in Derby.

Randy Langmaid broke his right arm in the crash.

Magnet message

OR EUGENE — The University of Oregon is defending its decision to tell one of its delivery drivers to remove a "Support Our Troops" magnet from the state-owned truck he uses at work.

Oregon law prohibits personal messages on state-owned vehicles, regardless of the context. University President Dave Frohnmayer said that driver Pete Baker will face no disciplinary action, and added that he was upset that the incident has led people to question the patriotism of the university.

New attention on grapes

CA BERKELEY — California grape growers and winemakers are hung up on "hang time" — how long grapes should be left on the vine.

Some winemakers want the grapes picked late to maximize flavor.

But growers say that cuts into their per-ton profits because grapes lose weight as they ripen.

"There's a lot of controversy about this," said Andy Beckstoffer, a major Napa Valley grower who recently organized a seminar on hang time that drew more than 500 people.

The issue of hang time, also known as extended ripening, has been around for at least five years, but the past year has brought increased attention, said Karen Ross, president of the California Association of Winegrape Growers in Sacramento.

Airport not proving itself

MO ST. LOUIS — At MidAmerica Airport, the parking is free, the waits are short and the terminal is gleaming.

But it needs some flights and passengers.

Before the airport opened in 1997 in Mascoutah, Ill., about 20 miles east of St. Louis, studies predicted well over a million passengers by 2005. The 2004 figure: 7,800 passengers.

However, Illinois officials remain committed to the airport.

One new development has raised some optimism.

In November, TransMeridian Airlines, a charter airline out of Lithia Springs, Ga., began offering a few flights a week out of the airport, flying passengers to and from Orlando, Fla. TransMeridian recently opted to extend its term at MidAmerica through Sept. 6.



Honoring veterans

Pat Murphy, former soldier with the 78th Infantry Division, second from bottom, flashes a peace sign on the floor of the Arkansas state senate in Little Rock, as survivors of the Battle of the Bulge are honored.



For the birds

Grackles perch on top of a tree in Abilene, Texas.



A Penny for your walk

Ethel Scobe takes her dog, Penny, for a walk in Wichita, Kan. The Boston terrier stays warm by wearing a fleece sweater.



Getting toasty

California sea lions sunbathe on a San Francisco boat dock.



Blue skies

A thick mist blankets the Willamette Valley floor at sunset near Springfield, Ore.



Early morning loner

Separated from the rest of the herd, a lone Hereford cow is silhouetted against the sunrise near Mount Carroll, Ill.



Truck falls off bridge

A truck is seen on its roof in the Middle Patuxent River along Interstate 95 in Savage, Md., following a multi-vehicle accident. The tractor-trailer flipped off a bridge, landing upside down in a ravine below. The driver survived.

Arrested for drawings

FL OCALA — Two boys were arrested for making pencil-and-crayon stick figures drawings depicting a 10-year-old classmate being stabbed and hung, police said. The children, charged with a felony, were taken from school in handcuffs.

The 9- and 10-year-old boys were charged with making a written threat to kill or harm another person. They also were suspended from school.

Wife gets life sentence

MI PONTIAC — An elementary school teacher who hacked her husband to death with a hatchet was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Before she was sentenced, Nancy Seaman read a statement in which she called the jury's guilty verdict "a miscarriage of justice" and a "tragic mistake." She said she would appeal.

Prosecutors said Seaman argued with her husband, Robert, last Mother's Day, went to Home Depot to buy a hatchet, returned to their home and killed him with it. Police found Robert Seaman's body in his wife's sport utility vehicle a few days later.

Nancy Seaman claimed that she bought the hatchet for yard work and that the couple got into an argument the next morning in which her husband of 31 years menaced her with a steak knife. She said she grabbed the nearest thing to defend herself.

Oakland County Circuit Judge John McDonald said he didn't "doubt for a minute" that Seaman was physically and emotionally abused. But he said jurors did not believe the abuse was so severe that it excused the slaying.

Heifer sells and resells

MT MISSOULA — A 520-pound heifer took center stage at the Missoula Livestock Exchange, where the animal was sold and resold about a dozen times to raise money for two groups opposed to relaxing restrictions on Canadian beef imports.

Auctioning the black Angus calf, along with a Western bronze statue and some other items, raised \$5,500 to \$6,000 for the Montana Cattlemen's Association and the Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, or R-CALF USA. R-CALF is the legal-action arm of the U.S. Stockgrowers Association.

The sale came nine days after authorities confirmed another case of mad cow disease in Alberta, Canada. It was the second Canadian animal found to have the deadly brain-wasting disease since December when the United States announced that cross-border cattle trade would resume in March.

Abuse allegations bills

NH CONCORD — A bill being debated by the House would prevent people from reporting child abuse anonymously, a measure that has elicited concern from children's advocates.

Rep. Lars Christiansen, R-Hudson, said too many people are falsely accused of child abuse and never know who pointed the finger of blame. He said it all adds up to a violation of civil rights.

According to the state, only 6 per-

cent of child abuse calls are anonymous. Department of Children, Youth and Families investigators oppose the idea of forcing callers to identify themselves, and they insist that their work is not heavy-handed.

School honor protested

GA CANTON — Parents and students are speaking out against plans to name a new school for a Confederate-era governor.

The Cherokee County Board of Education voted 4-3 to name the county's newest high school after former Gov. Joseph E. Brown.

However, some parents and students who will attend the school say the name invites controversy.

Scott Rowland, who has three children, said naming the school after a Confederate governor brings connotations of racism, "whether justified or not."

Brown is referred to in the history books as a "rabid secessionist." Ending slavery, he said, would lead to the South's ruin.

Besides teaching in Cherokee, Brown had a long-term interest in education. He was the first president of the Atlanta Public Schools, and he was a founding board member at historically black Atlanta University, according to Cathy Loving-Pye, historian/archivist for Atlanta schools.

Park fees now law

AZ TUCSON — Visitors to national forests and other federal lands who had hoped temporary recreation fees would soon vanish will have no such luck.

The fees were first imposed in 1996 on temporary permits and have been renewed by Congress every two years since. But last fall, Congress wrote the fees into law for at least a decade.

Congress approved the law as part of a larger appropriations bill in November, and President Bush signed it Dec. 8.

Town's population back

NC RALEIGH — At the time of the 2000 census, Princetonville was still mostly a disaster zone after being devastated by flooding from Hurricane Floyd. Many of its residents abandoned their homes for drier ground.

Town officials suspected then that the population would be uncoun-tered because of the storm, and requested a special recount.

Revised figures now show Princetonville, about 60 miles northeast of Raleigh, has 2,029 residents — more than twice as many as the 974 listed in the official 2000 count.

Foster parents punished

RI PROVIDENCE — A Cranston couple's foster license is on hold after a young man in their care shot himself in the leg with a gun found in the father's sock drawer.

The police said the bullet pierced 20-year-old Daniel Lillie's lower right thigh and exited just above the back of his knee.

Veronica Manders, 38, told The Providence Journal she plans to lobby DCYF to keep her foster-care license. She said the incident has caused her and her husband to separate. The couple have taken care of 20 foster children over the past eight years.

Stories and photos from wire services

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Where's the incentive?

I hear of re-enlistment bonuses all the time. I and others like me are stuck in the political policies put forth to us with no concern for each individual's history.

A lot of personnel don't understand or know of the problems we face. I have served our country and flag for 34 years.

So we technicians. Many of us are past our mandatory removal date. Once we hit this stage, we are told to put in an exemption-to-policy letter or we lose our position. Other personnel who are not military technicians and reach this stage can go on to retire. The military says it will do everything possible to stop discrimination, but this is a form of it. Once we hit this point, where is the incentive?

■ We cannot accept bonuses.

■ We don't receive pay increases (except cost of living).

■ We don't get promotions.

■ We must maintain our military status. I have served with units that, through my effort and fortune, have achieved national recognition. Neither I nor the soldiers who worked for me were given recognition for these efforts.

I would like Congress to stand back and see through our eyes and then judge the standards to which it submits us. I am currently on extension, although I have not received anything stating so.

What incentive do we as soldiers have now? Go jobless at home, or stay in the military.

Master Sgt. William Russell

Camp Spearhead, Kuwait

Warning trend is nothing new

I had a hearty laugh while reading "The real story on columnist" (letter, Jan. 21).

We have a Michael Moore clone attacking "big business" and "neo-cons" like they are contagious diseases, even to the effect of "unwitting readers."

It is true that the Earth is warming at its surface. In fact, the environmentalists are more than happy to point out that the latest warning trend has been occurring for about a decade. The age of the Earth ranges from 5,000 years to billions of years, de-

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pending on whom you ask. So, a decade or two of global warming is like the 24-hour flu to an adult.

The average surface temperatures in the continental United States between 1895 and 2000 are available from the National Climatic Data Center. The hottest year during that time was 1998 (President Clinton presiding) and the second hottest year was 1934 (President Franklin D. Roosevelt presiding), the difference of the two a thundersome 0.1 degrees Fahrenheit. History buffs will note that the Great Depression began in 1929 and ended in 1941. Big business was not so big during that time.

What the environmentalists are not discussing is the evidence that humans do not cause global warming. Any rise in average surface temperatures on the planet, if caused by humans, must come from low-troposphere warming (the section of our atmosphere one to five miles above the Earth's surface) where greenhouse gasses congregate. Satellites and weather balloons do not show low-troposphere warming.

The air temperature at the surface of the Earth is a result of activities internal to the atmosphere and activities external to the atmosphere. Internal examples are,

but not limited to, warming in the troposphere (due to greenhouse gasses) and Pacific Decadal Oscillation, a naturally occurring phenomenon that strikes the Pacific Ocean about every 30 years.

An example of external activity would be the exothermic effects of the large hydro-bomb around which we currently orbit.

So, while the greenhouse gas region of the atmosphere is not warming, the surface of the Earth is. I think it is only fair that the sun should share in the blame for global warming.

Scott Spahr

Schweinfurt, Germany

Costume was symbol of evil

The Nazis are indeed part of history ("Reactions to swastika 'absurd,'" letter, Jan. 22), and their claim to fame, if you will, is the extermination of 6 million Jews during World War II. Adolf Hitler led them to believe that Jews were to blame for the economic and social problems in Germany and the unenlightened among them bought it. There is nothing glamorous about the Nazis and there never will be.

No doubt the letter writer is in Iraq working to secure the freedom of the Iraqi people from tyranny. Saddam Hussein's idea of leadership was to rule with an iron fist and suppress "whiny special-interest groups" such as the Kurds by gassing them.

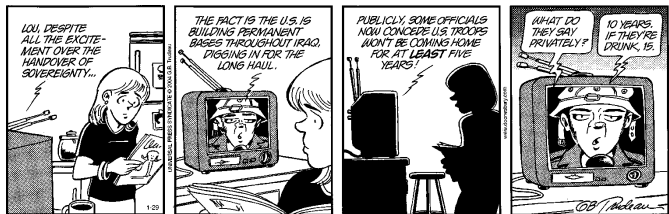
Every free person has the duty to boldly speak against oppression and anything that romanticizes it. Prince Harry's "simple costume" was a symbol of the evil of Nazi oppression, and Americans fought and died in World War II with honor and valor for the principle of freedom. America led that fight and the mission continues today.

President Bush said it best in his inaugural speech when he said that America "will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation: the moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right."

Kristen Derynoski

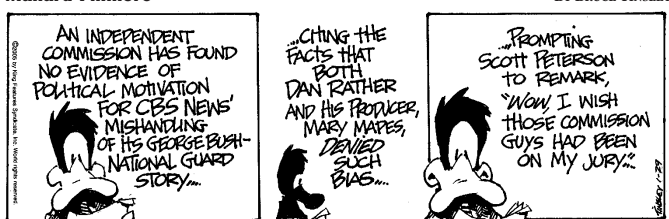
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BY GARRY TRUDEAU



BY BRUCE TINSLEY

Mallard Fillmore



Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



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...IF JOB PERFORMANCE REVIEWS WERE LIKE CONDI RICE'S SENATE CONFIRMATION HEARING...



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Horoscope

Mercury enters Capricorn, and a more somber mode of conversation becomes appropriate. Getting the message across requires that we cross the 'fs and dot the 's. There's a certain fascination with the formalities of language and a delight in communication as an art form. Attract luck by pointing your verbal style.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (January 29). This year is characterized by a wallowing dose of financial luck in the first three months. Sure, money can't buy love. But it does allow you to relax and explore who you really are—and this attracts fantastic partners. The honest emotion you put out this spring is returned twice over. Sagittarius and Capricorn are true-blue romantic partners.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You can't put your finger on any one thing, but there does seem to be a joyful epidemic sweeping you up. Who needs a reason? Walk around with a big smile on your face, and see whom you can infect with it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The rebellious spirit sets in. You don't feel completely satisfied unless you're doing something that would freak out your mother. This behavior, of course, is extremely attractive, especially to Scorpios and Leos.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're unconsciously trying to get someone's attention—probably someone who is so oblivious he or she might not even notice if you jumped out of a cake or parachuted from the sky. Don't take it personally.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Family brings a mixed blessing. Instead of resolving to take the good with the bad, make an effort to improve "the bad." Everyone is better off for your effort. Confrontation isn't something to avoid at all costs after all.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). If "play" is an art form, you become a fine artist today. Use mischief to add excitement to a relationship, cement

a friendship or put an intriguing flair into your creative work. Someone from the past gets back in communication.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

You'll be called on to entertain. If you can't dazzle 'em with brilliance, battle 'em with whatever comes off the top of your head. You are really much more captivating than you think.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You can spin a wild story from a few unrelated circumstances—just one of the ways you needlessly distract yourself. Don't give in to imaginary fears. If making one phone call can allay your paranoia, make the call.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You can't resist someone with a devilish look in his or her eye—but maybe you should. You're easily led down the windy path of mystery and thrills, but the real thrill comes from honoring prior commitments.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Now, you're somewhat of an impossibility challenger. You take on the thing that requires the most discipline and training. If you put your mind to it, you could even break a Guinness World Record.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Success in entrepreneurial ventures could begin with a simple seminar or workshop. You'll never know if you don't sign up. Unemployed folks have exceptionally luck finding work that is actually fun to do.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Protect what you have. It's the best way to bring more of what you want into your life. Some of you, unfortunately, feel guilty about being too fulfilled. As if there were such a thing! Get rid of that baggage.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Take turns being the audience and the entertainer; you feel like you are perpetually in the audience, vary your routine, and creativity returns. You deserve to be acknowledged for your talent.

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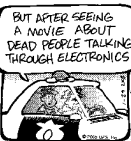
Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



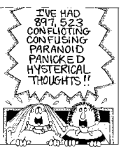
Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



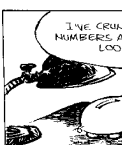
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



Better or Worse



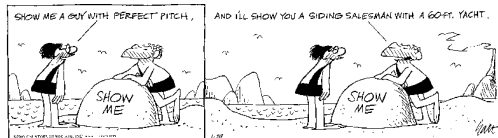
Peanuts



Fox trot



B.C.



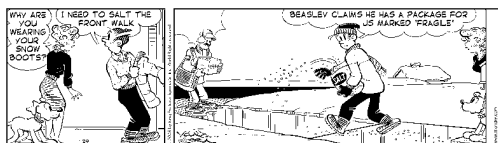
Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



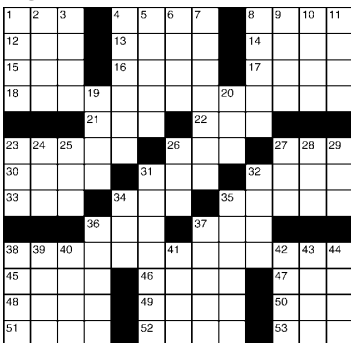
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Upper limit
- 4 Exchange
- 8 Walton and Waterston
- 12 Inseparable
- 13 Arizona tribe
- 14 Slightly
- 15 "Morty Python" opener
- 16 Mad king of literature
- 17 Llama land
- 18 Eponym of an Idaho jazz festival
- 21 U.K. ref. b.p.
- 22 Rotation duration
- 23 "Pacific Overtures" setting
- 26 Co-host of "The View"
- 27 Moonshine holder
- 30 Beehive State
- 31 Indulge in fisticuffs
- 32 McGwire competitor
- 33 Cowboy's nickname
- 34 Enjoyment
- 35 Winning
- 36 Churchill's "so few" (Abbr.)
- 37 Back
- 38 "Baby, I Love Your Way" singer
- 40 Count
- 41 Jam ingredient?
- 42 Mimic
- 43 On the briny

Down

- 1 Spring wind?
- 2 Con
- 3 Chilean money
- 4 Ill will
- 5 Handle effectively
- 6 Asian nursemaid
- 7 Confusing contradiction
- 8 Overemotional
- 9 Drive the getaway car
- 10 Painter Joan
- 11 Dazzle
- 12 Grandson of Methuselah
- 20 Cape —, N.J.
- 23 Prutude
- 24 Noshed
- 25 TV network
- 26 Garfield's owner
- 27 — Montana
- 28 OAS member
- 29 Roam about
- 31 Bewilder
- 32 Buy stuff
- 34 Somewhere out there
- 35 Weaponry storehouse
- 36 Take it easy
- 37 Deadly
- 38 Carrots' mates
- 39 Right on the map
- 40 Low club
- 41 Devastation
- 42 Mexican entree
- 43 October stone
- 44 Dweeb

Answer to Previous Puzzle



1-29

CRYPTOQUIP

TZPH IWJXLYPO CJXIZE
WPVNLXWEP VJHQP JTPQ, N
EXRRJEP IZJEP SWP

OPYNHDXPHI RSCVPHIE.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A LOCAL TAVERN HAS THIS MOTTO IN ITS ADVERTISEMENTS: "THIRST COME, THIRST SERVED."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals P

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Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova of Russia shows frustration during her women's singles semifinal match against Serena Williams in the Australian Open. The American won the match 2-6, 7-5, 6-6.

And in this corner...

Sharapova, Serena Williams are showing signs of developing into one of tennis' storied rivalries

BY DENNIS PASSA
The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — It's not in the same league — yet — of Billie Jean vs. Chris, Martina vs. Steffi, or most recently, Serena vs. Venus.

But the recent rivalry in big matches between Serena Williams, 23, and 17-year-old Maria Sharapova has the potential — both players agree — to turn into an enduring one.

"I think she is one of the best competitors out there," Sharapova said Thursday after her 2-6, 7-5, 6-6 loss to Williams in the Australian Open semifinal in which Williams saved three match points.

"She's been in those situations when she was down in the third set, and out of nowhere she knows how to turn it around. That comes from experience, that comes from her fighting spirit."

Williams, who has six career Grand Slam singles titles, won the first match against Sharapova at Miami in 2004. She then lost both big ones — last year's Wimbledon final and in the season-ending WTA Championships. "I think it definitely lived up to expectations," Williams said of Thursday's match. "I definitely think she has a fighting spirit and I think she's gotten her to where she is today."

She also feels that Sharapova, who moved to Florida from Russia at age 9, considers her a role model.

"I think she [Serena Williams] is one of the best competitors out there. She's been in those situations when she was down in the third set, and out of nowhere she knows how to turn it around."

Maria Sharapova
Wimbledon champion

"I definitely think she's probably looked at me as a reference growing up, which is exciting," Williams said. "I never thought I'd play someone that probably looked up to me."

The mutual admiration ended there Thursday. Asked what Williams had showed her during the match, Sharapova replied, "Nothing."

And Williams reminded everyone that, although she credited Sharapova with having a fighting spirit, "I'm still top fighter out there."

Sharapova could learn from Williams' comeback in the match. Sharapova served for the match at 5-4 in both the second and third sets. She didn't have a match point in the second set, but was a point away from victory three times in the third.

"In the second, I thought, 'OK, I could have won this set already, why am I still out there?'" Williams said. "In the third, I thought, 'OK, I've been in this situation before, no problem.'"

Williams had saved match points and won three previous matches — against Kim Clijsters in the 2003 Australian Open semifinal (in which she beat sister Venus in the final), and twice against Lindsay Davenport, her opponent in Saturday's final.

"Those are always the best wins, when you're down match point, because you realize that you can't give up," she said.

Sharapova said she didn't give up either on Thursday.

"I gave it all I had. I played from my heart," she said. "I didn't take my chances when I could. And that's what this game is all about. The match could have gone any way, and she took her chances and she played well when she needed to. That's the difference."

The fourth-ranked Sharapova was philosophical about the loss.

"This is not a sprint, it's a marathon," Sharapova said, foreshadowing future big games against Williams and other top players.

"Of course I'm sad, and obviously it's a tough one to lose. But I've got a long way ahead of me."

Safin dazzles in beating Federer

BY PAUL ALEXANDER
The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Marat Safin ended top-ranked Roger Federer's 26-match winning streak in a classic Australian Open semifinal, outlasting the defending champion 5-7, 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (8-6), 9-7 in a dazzling 4½-hour match.

Safin, seeded fourth and trying to regain the No. 1 ranking he held briefly after winning the U.S. Open in 2000, saved one match point in overcoming the unusually jittery Federer, who hadn't dropped a set in five previous matches, including a quarter-final domination of Andre Agassi.

Federer received treatment for elbow and back pain in the fifth set, then saved six match points before Safin broke his serve with a forehand into an open court as Federer watched from his knees.

Safin, reaching the final at Melbourne Park for the third time in four years, next meets the winner of Friday night's semifinal between second-ranked Andy Roddick and No. 3 Lleyton Hewitt.

The women's final matches seventh-seeded Serena Williams against top-ranked Lindsay Davenport. Williams fended off three

match points to avenge her Wimbledon final loss to No. 4 Maria Sharapova 2-6, 7-5, 8-6, stretching her Australian Open winning streak to 13 matches.

Davenport looked lethargic after playing more than four hours Wednesday, but rallied to hold off No. 19 Nathalie Dechy of France 2-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4.

Safin vs. Federer was pure crowd-pleasing tennis between two of the game's most gifted all-around players. Every point was a struggle as they punished weak shots and swapped stinging groundstrokes and drop volleys.

"It's like a brain fight against... Roger Federer," Safin said. "I think we played the best we could and I couldn't give any more than that."

Safin was exhausted going into last year's final — which he lost to Federer — after six matches that averaged three hours.

Demonstrating the skills that took him to No. 1 after his only Grand Slam title at Flushing Meadows, he was much fresher this time — and needed to be.

"I'm not playing against just a simple player. He's No. 1 in the world," Safin said. It was his birthday on Thursday, and he planned a quiet celebration with

a glass of champagne when he got back to his room in the early hours of Friday morning.

"It was one of the toughest matches of my life. I need time to recover," he said. "Five sets is a kind of lottery. Anything can happen."

While serving at 5-6, he mis-hit a backhand, then sent a backhand long to give Federer the first set. Frustrated, the mercurial Russian tossed his racket high in the air and missed the catch.

Federer then lost his first set of the tournament, showing the first real signs of tension in 11 days. Serving at 1-1 in the second set, he smacked an overhead wide, then hit a backhand into the net for the only service break. Safin held serve the rest of the way.

Usually unflappable, Federer committed an uncharacteristic 14 errors in the set to just five for Safin. Clearly frustrated, Federer shouted at himself after missing opportunities and charged the net more frequently than usual.

As in the first set, Federer broke serve with Safin serving at 5-6 in the fourth. Safin smashed his second racket of the tournament after one error, and sent a forehand way long.

The last time they met in a tie-breaker, Federer prevailed 20-18 in the Masters Cup. This time, Safin trailed 5-2 before running off the next three points. Federer made a stunning drop shot from the baseline to serve for the match at 6-5. Safin then won the next three points to force a deciding fifth set.

Federer called in trainer Paul Ness, who massaged his right forearm and elbow. Three games later, Ness returned to stretch out Federer's back as he lay on the court.

Federer said he felt some pain in his right arm, from the shoulder to his fingers.

"It's not a injury — it's just something that was bothering me," he said.

Safin took a 4-2 lead in the deciding set as Federer committed his seventh double fault on break point. Federer got back on serve by saving two match points as Safin served 5-3, then held to get back on serve. Federer fended off another match point in the next game, another two while serving at 6-7 and a sixth at 7-8 before Safin finished it.

Davenport is healthy after a bout of bronchitis just before the

Australian Open

Thursday
At Melbourne Park
Melbourne, Australia
Purse: \$14.5 million (Grand Slam)
Singles: Hard-Outdoor

Men
Semifinals
Marat Safin (4, Russia), ed. Roger Federer (5, Switzerland), 5-7, 6-4, 5-7 (6-6), 9-7.

Women
Semifinals
Serena Williams (1, United States), ed. Maria Sharapova (4, Russia), 2-6, 7-5, 8-6 (8-6).
Nathalie Dechy (19, France), 2-6, 7-6 (5), 4-6.

Doubles
Semifinals
Wayne Black and Kevin Pietrangeli (5, Zimbabwe), ed. Jürgen Melzer, Austria, and Jürgen Melzer, Germany, 6-3, 6-4.
Bob and Mike Bryan (2), United States, ed. Jonas Björkman, Sweden, and Max Mirnyi (4), Belarus, 6-1, 6-3.

Quarterfinals
Kevin Ulster, Zimbabwe, and Lleyton Hewitt (4, South Africa), ed. Bob Bryan, United States, and Mike Bryan (2), Russia, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 7-6 (6).

tournament, which she won in 2000 for her last Grand Slam title. But she was tight after a 2½-hour quarterfinal victory Friday that was followed by more than 1½ hours in doubles.

It showed. She finished with 48 winners and 52 enforced errors — but only 11 in the final set as she finally loosened up.

"It's been a long two days. I woke up this morning, I just felt pretty tight all over," Davenport said. "It wasn't my greatest day playing tennis — but I'll take it."

Limping LeBron lifts Cavaliers to victory

James sprains ankle but returns to ensure win for Cleveland

BY TOM WITHERS

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — The legend of LeBron James has a new chapter — complete with a twist.

Shaking off a sprained left ankle, James returned for the final minutes of the fourth quarter to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 114-111 victory Wednesday night over the Memphis Grizzlies.

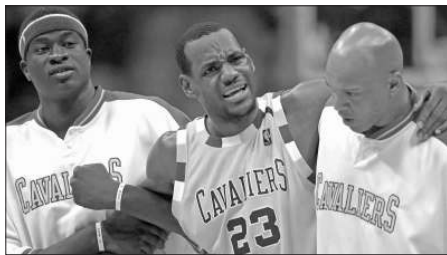
James finished with 27 points, a career-high 15 assists and nine rebounds, blocking out the pain over the closing 4:53 to make several big plays as the Cavaliers held off the short-handed Grizzlies.

"I had to lead my team," James said. "My 80 percent can help us win. I can't be scared. I've got to be a soldier out there."

James might play in Friday night's road game against the New York Knicks after tests revealed no further damage to his ankle.

The team said James underwent a detailed medical exam in Cleveland on Thursday. He will be re-evaluated on Friday in New York and his status will be a game-time decision.

When James came down on Dahnay Jones' foot and rolled his ankle with 9:33 left, more than 17,000 fans in Gund Arena



Cleveland's LeBron James (23) is helped off the court by DeSagana Diop, left, and Scott Williams after suffering a sprained left ankle during the fourth quarter Wednesday against Memphis. Tests showed no further damage and James might play Friday against the Knicks.

went eerily silent and Cavaliers coach Paul Silas feared the worst.

"You kind of see your life flash before your eyes," Silas said. "I saw a whole bunch of losses coming up."

Instead, the determined James, who had to be helped off the floor by teammates, came back and made sure the first-place Cavaliers didn't blow a lead while improving to an Eastern Conference-best 15-4 at home and 25-16 overall.

It looked as though James' night was over with the Cavaliers up 95-85. After fall-

ing to the floor, play continued for another 10 seconds while James rolled around, pounding his hand on the court before slinging his protective face mask and headband away in disgust.

As he was helped off, James complained to officials that he had been undercut by Jones, who had earlier dunked over him on a breakaway and talked trash to Cleveland's star.

"I had nowhere to land," said James, who didn't think Jones did it intentionally. Jones wanted to make sure that James

was OK and visited him following the game. The pair shook hands and spoke briefly while James iced his sore ankle near his corner locker.

"Me and him are friends before anything," Jones said.

James, who coincidentally sprained his other ankle in Cleveland's 41st game a year ago, said he didn't think the ankle was badly hurt when he first went down. By the time he left the floor, James said it felt well enough to try and walk some.

"I got to the locker room, we retaped it and I was ready to go," he said. "I wasn't 100 percent, but I was able to finish the game."

Drew Gooden scored 27 points — six during the 4½ minutes when James was out — and had 11 rebounds and Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 22 points for the Cavaliers.

The Grizzlies, playing without injured center Pau Gasol and forward James Posey, were led by Mike Miller's season-high 28 points.

"We came in here kind of short-handed, and they were, too, so it's not an excuse," Miller said. "They executed better down the stretch. He [James] came back in and made some plays."

The Cavaliers, who were missing super-sub Anderson Varejao, lost starter Ira Newble in the first quarter on an Achilles injury.

"Ira's not doing well," Silas said. "It really flared up on him."

Newble is expected to be out at least a week.

The Cavaliers are looking to sign a veteran forward to a 10-day contract.

Clippers court rival Lakers

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles Lakers and Los Angeles Clippers haven't had much of a rivalry over the years, because the Lakers have always been the better team.

It was the Clippers who dominated Wednesday night.

Elton Brand had 26 points and 14 rebounds, Bobby Simmons added 21 points, and the Clippers led nearly all the way in a 105-89 victory.

The Lakers had beaten the Clippers five straight times, including twice this season, and in 28 of the past 31 games. The Clippers have won only 20 of 98 games against the Lakers since moving from San Diego to Los Angeles before the 1984-85 season.

The teams now seem more evenly matched than ever.

Chris Kaman had 14 points and career-high totals of 16 rebounds and five blocked shots in teasing with Brand to dominate the inside.

The Clippers outrebounded the Lakers 51-39.

"We just got mangled on the boards again," said Lakers coach Rudy Tomjanovich.

"I think they were really ready for us because we had won the previous two games," Tomjanovich said. "They came out after us and took it to us. It was a pounding, and I'm not really happy with our response. Sometimes you've got to take your lumps."

Mediocre Celtics take Atlantic lead

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Strike up the band! The Boston Celtics are all alone in first place in the NBA's Atlantic Division.

"If you win two in a row, you're automatically in first place in the Atlantic Division. It's in the agreement, you know," coach Doc Rivers said Wednesday night after the Celtics beat the Indiana Pacers 100-86. "Hell, you lose two in a row and you can be in first place in the Atlantic Division."

The Celtics are leading the division at two games below .500, passing Philadelphia after the 76ers lost 117-107 to the Washington Wizards. The Celtics hadn't been in first this late in the season since Larry Bird was playing.

That was at the end of the

1990-91 season, and the Celtics were 56-26. These Celtics are 20-22.

"It's good to be on top of the division, which puts us in the No. 3 seed" for the playoffs, said Paul Pierce, who scored 23. "But even though we're in first place, we're not playing like a first-place team."

Raef LaFrentz had 12 points with 11 rebounds, Gary Payton had 10 points with nine assists and Ricky Davis scored 15 as a reserve to spoil Stephen Jackson's return from a 30-game brawl suspension.

Jackson scored 17 points in 38 minutes in his first game back since the Nov. 19 melee against Detroit, when Artis Warren into the stands seeking a fan who

threw a cup at him. Jackson followed Artis into the crowd and took several swings at fans.

Jermaine O'Neal scored 25 for the Pacers.

Jackson hit the Pacers' first basket of the night — a three-pointer in the first two minutes — and scored eight points in the first quarter. But he went 0-for-6 from three-point range in the next three quarters.

"I felt like a kid. I'm back and I'm happy to be back," he said. "I was pumped, excited to be out there. But as the game went on, my shots felt shorter and shorter from the rim. You have to be out there to get in shape."

Boston won its fourth consecutive home game a night after ending a nine-game road losing streak.

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Overachieving Nuggets

The Associated Press

DENVER — George Karl had been involved with basketball since the seventh grade, so not having it in his life for nearly two years left him feeling empty.

Now that he's back on the NBA, Karl has a greater appreciation for what the game has meant to him.

Out of the NBA since the Bucks fired him in 2003, Karl was back in Milwaukee on Tuesday to take over as coach of the underachieving Denver Nuggets. He's expected to be on the bench Friday night, making his debut with the Nuggets against his former team.

"The last 18 months was the first time I was not with a basketball team for 38 years," Karl said. "I now realize how fun and what a privilege it is to be with a basketball team."

The Nuggets hope his enthusiasm rubs off. One of the preseason favorites in the Western Conference, Denver hasn't lived up to the expectations that came with adding All-Star power forward Kenyon Martin to a team that had reached the playoffs for the first time in nine years.

Plagued by injuries and inconsistency, the Nuggets got off to a horrible start and haven't recovered. Coach Jack R. Delgado lost his job Dec. 28 and Denver has been only marginally better under interim coach Michael Cooper, entering Friday's game 17-25 and 12½ games out of first place in the Northwest Division.

Karl brings plenty of credibility, ranking 13th on the career list with 708 victories and leading his teams to five division titles and 13 playoff appearances in 16 seasons. He has also had experience turning around underachieving teams.

Karl helped Seattle reach the playoffs in 1991-92 after the team was 20-20 and coach R.C. Jones was fired. Karl led the Sonics to three 60-victory seasons in five years, including a trip to the 1996 NBA Finals.

So. Florida welcomes Delgado

By STEVEN WINE

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Carlos Delgado and the Florida Marlins finalized their \$52 million, four-year contract Thursday, a move that could change the balance of power in the NL East.

Delgado, who hit at least 30 home runs each of the past eight seasons with Toronto, passed his physical Wednesday and was introduced during a news conference.

"I want to put myself on a team that has a chance to win, and that's the Florida Marlins," Delgado said.

Florida won out over the New York Mets, who also offered \$52 million and Baltimore Orioles, who also offered \$48 million.

"I think this is the best fit for me to have a chance to win," Delgado said. "The climate here is warm and warm here, the fact that it's only only two hours from Puerto Rico, yeah, it is very nice as well."

His addition is a boost to the Marlins, who are trying to put together a financing package for a new ballpark.

"It shows my desire to win. Everybody knows how I hate to lose," Delgado said. "I want to win."

"This signing makes perfect sense for this team at this time."

Florida is trying to end Atlan-

Sports briefs

"He's clearly one of the best coaches in the NBA, has always been so and his record exhibits that," Nuggets GM Kiki Vandeweghe said. "We are very excited to have him with us."

Karl has had clashes with players at just about every stop in his coaching career, particularly in Milwaukee, but always seems to get the best out of his players. The time off has allowed him to take a look at his approach to coaching.

"I feel pretty confident that I'm going to be better because of what happened in Milwaukee," said Karl, who was an analyst with ESPN after being fired by the Bucks. "Hopefully, I'm an intelligent being who will learn from the mistakes that we made here."

BYU player accused of lying to police will transfer

PROVO, Utah — Wide receiver Antwan Harris, accused of lying to police investigating rape allegations against former Brigham Young football player, will transfer from BYU, the school announced.

The Garland, Texas, native had 17 interceptions for 140 yards last season. He and defensive back Billy Skinner, 19, were suspended last month after lesser charges were lodged against them related to the rape investigation. Four other players were accused of rape and were suspended by BYU for one year.

The charge against Harris of providing false information to police is a second-degree felony.

"In response to the new direction this program is taking, with an increase in both accountability and discipline," Antwan has decided to pursue his football career at another university," coach Bronco Mendenhall said Wednesday. "He has my full support."

Mets get Mientkiewicz, Red Sox get his ball

By RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — This much the New York Mets can count on: Doug Mientkiewicz knows how to hang onto a baseball.

The Mets acquired the former Gold Glove first baseman from the Red Sox on Wednesday for mid-year league fees, because an Bladergroen, and Boston said he intends to loan Boston the ball he caught for the final out of the World Series.

The 30-year-old Mientkiewicz, who won the 2001 AL Gold Glove with Minnesota, said Boston asked to have the ball for one year, and he intends to comply.

"There was never a fight, there was never words exchanged. It was very cordial, and we worked something out," he said. "I want the fans to see it, and that's why both the Red Sox and I agreed on. They waited a long time to see that ball and to live it. The fact he had it was just what we could keep it and give it to the fans and let them see it."

Mientkiewicz said he will not receive any money under the deal and "probably" would get the ball back after a year.

"Ownership has not been resolved," Red Sox owner John Henry said in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

Mientkiewicz emphasized that he's "doing everything they asked me to do."

Gatti ready to defend title against Leija

NEW YORK — In a manner matching his aggressive fighting style, Arturo Gatti simply presented his plan for his upcoming title bout against Jesse James Leija.

"I'm coming to kill — not to win, to kill," the WBC super lightweight champion said in a news conference Wednesday.

Gatti is known for his action-packed fights. His trilogy with Mickey Ward is touted by many as one of the best rivalries in boxing history, and he is consistently praised for the heart and courage he shows in the ring.

It's that kind of action that fans will be looking for on Saturday night's scheduled 12-round fight at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City. The fight will also be telecast as part of HBO's "World Championship Boxing Series."

The 32-year-old Gatti, 38-0 with 29 knockouts, won the title in January 2004, when he dethroned Italian Gianluca Branco. He kept the crown in July with a one-punch knockout of previously unbeaten Leonard Dorcic.

Leija, 38, is 47-2-6 with 18 knockouts.

Trinidad to fight Wright in nontitle bout

LAS VEGAS — Former three-time world champion Felix Trinidad will fight for the second time since coming out of retirement when he meets reigning 154-pound champion Winky Wright on May 14.

The fight, announced Thursday by promoter Don King, will be held at 160 pounds with no titles at stake.

Trinidad came off a layoff of more than two years to knock out Ricardo Mayorga in the eighth round last October in a middleweight bout. A former champion at 147, 154 and 160 pounds, he is 41-1 with 34 knockouts, losing only to middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins.

Wright (48-3, 25 knockouts) is coming off back-to-back wins over Shane Mosley.

Duke: Terps 'wanted it' more, stole road win

DUKE, FROM BACK PAGE

J.J. Redick led the Blue Devils with 20 points but also had eight turnovers, including two within seconds in the final minutes.

Shelden Williams added 18 points and 14 rebounds.

"You have to take your hats off to Maryland," said Duke guard Daniel Ewing, who was held to nine points. "We didn't match their hunger. They wanted it a little bit more, and that's why they walked out of here with a win."

Top-ranked Louisville (20-0) and No. 8 Boston College (17-0) are the only teams left without a loss.

Duke seemingly was in control early in the second half, taking a pair of eight-point leads, the final one on a layup by Lee Melchionni. Ewing set it up with a nifty touch pass off a rebound, and it was 42-34.

Canner-Medley quickly led the rally. He made two free throws, then followed with a three-point and a jumper to cut the margin to four. Later, he added a putback to make it 47-46, and Chris McCraw gave the Terps their first lead of the second half with a layup.

That was the first of five lead changes in the final 13½ minutes.

"I just think he overpowered us a few times," Coach K said. "If there's one thing that won the game, it was that his desire to win was great. He put on a hell of a performance."

Ewing swished a three to put the Blue Devils ahead 58-54, but Canner-Medley responded with one of his own from several feet beyond the arc, with Redick right in his face. Canner-Medley had his first points from in close with 3:45 left to give Maryland a 64-60 lead, then left for good about 2 minutes later.

Redick had a steal at midcourt and was driving for a layup, with Canner-Medley racing back to try to stop it. The steal was good, and Redick's left-handed attempt never touched the rim.

But Canner-Medley made it only a few steps toward the other end before failing to grab his left ankle in agony. He went to the bench, and after Shaivik Iliadis picked it one final time by following up a missed free throw by Shelden Williams, Iliadis helped the Terps win.

"I think that you have to win a game against a quality team during the year to have credibility and to tie it one final time by following up a missed free throw by Shelden Williams, Iliadis helped the Terps win."

"I'm sure they're very proud of what they've done."

BC edges Providence to remain unbeaten

The Associated Press



Boston College's Jared Dudley drives to the basket around Providence's Ryan Gomes during the second half on Wednesday. Dudley scored 21 points to help the Eagles extend their unbeaten streak to 17 games.

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The Boston College Eagles believe something special is happening this season, and it's not luck, either.

Jared Dudley scored 21 points and hit a three-pointer with 1:20 left to give Boston College the lead, and the No. 8 Eagles remained undefeated with a 78-75 victory over Providence on Wednesday night.

Boston College (17-0, 6-0 Big East) has the best record in school history in the regular season and conference play.

"It's just something about us," Craig Smith, who also scored 21 points, said. "We just have a feeling we can't lose right now. We always go into each game feeling we should win."

Boston College and No. 1 Illinois are the only undefeated teams left in Division I. No. 2 Duke lost for the first time Wednesday night, falling 75-66 to Maryland.

Donnie McGrath led Providence (9-9, 0-5) with 17 points, matching his season high, and made five three-pointers. Leading scorer Ryan Gomes was held to 13 points on 5-for-14 shooting. Providence has lost five straight.

A three-pointer by McGrath gave the Friars a 75-71 lead with 3:19 left in the game. BC's Jermaine Watson then hit a floater from the baseline to draw the Eagles within two. The teams traded turnovers before Dudley's three-pointer from the left wing put BC in front.

"He's exploded this year," Smith said of Dudley, who also led the Eagles with 12 rebounds and added six assists. "He should be a named player should be talking about. That shot shows how much poise he has, and he's willing to take big shots."

Men's Top 25 Roundup

Providence's Dwight Brewington missed a three-pointer with less than a minute left, but Gomes grabbed the rebound. He whirled in the lane, but got caught in the air with two defenders on him and turned the ball over.

Watson made one free throw to give BC a 77-75 lead, but missed the second to give Providence a chance with 31 seconds left. DeSean White missed a jumper with 10 seconds remaining, and Dudley hit a free throw two seconds later to give Boston College a three-point lead.

White said he was looking for Gomes from the moment he touched the ball.

"By the time I looked down [in the lane], there was a double [team] on him, and I had to do something," said White, who finished with eight points. "So, I shot. I make that nine out of 10 times."

After Dudley's free throw, Boston College used a foul to take some time off the clock, and McGrath's three-point attempt was off the mark as time expired.

"Our kids fought hard, but I thought BC did a better job in the last couple of minutes, taking better shots while our kids took some questionable shots," Providence coach Tim Welsh said.

Providence led 41-38 at the break. Two three-pointers by Gomes and a basket by Brewington, followed by a three-pointer by McGrath, gave the Friars their biggest lead of the game at 55-44 less than four minutes into the second half. A three-point shot by Smith and two baskets by Sean

Marshall got Boston College within four less than two minutes later. Neither team led by more than four points in the final 12 minutes.

"We didn't get in a panic or a frenzy," Watson said. "We just executed. We didn't get nervous. We knew we were going to come back."

No. 12 Louisville 99, Marquette 55: At Louisville, Ky., Larry O'Bannon made six three-pointers and scored 30 points, both career highs, to help Louisville (17-3, 5-1 Conference USA) hand Marquette its worst-ever loss.

Todd Townsend had 17 points for Marquette (14-5, 2-4). The 47-point margin topped the previous mark of 45 in a 57-12 loss to Creighton in 1940.

No. 14 Alabama 60, Auburn 55: At Auburn, Ala., Earnest Shelton scored 22 points and made five late three-pointers to lead Alabama to its fourth straight victory over Auburn.

The Crimson Tide (16-3, 5-1 Southeastern Conference) held on after Auburn (9-9, 0-5) had cut a 15-point deficit to one.

Northwestern 75, No. 23 Iowa 74 (OT): At Evanston, Ill., Michael Jenkins' three-pointer at the overtime buzzer hit the rim, bounced high and fell through to give Northwestern (9-9, 2-4 Big Ten) a stunning victory. The Wildcats rallied from 12 down with 3:27 to go in regulation.

Northern's Brian Vukusic sent it to overtime when he hit three free throws after being fouled on a three-point attempt with 13.8 seconds left. He finished with a career-high 32 points, 13 in the final two minutes of regulation.

Greg Brunner had a career-high 28 points for Iowa (14-5, 2-4).

Huskies continue to climb under Romar

BY TIM KORTE

The Associated Press

SEATTLE — Since he took over at Washington three years ago, coach Lorenzo Romar has regularly cited Arizona as the Pac-10 team program he most wanted to emulate.

Well, just look at those rising Huskies. These days, they share a remarkable resemblance to Lute Olson's Wildcats.

After breaking a five-year NCAA tournament absence last season, Washington (16-2, 6-1) is ranked No. 10 going into Thursday night's showdown at No. 11 Arizona (16-3, 6-1).

In this week's RPI ratings, the Wildcats are No. 6 and the Huskies are No. 7. It's just another area where Romar believes his program is approaching Arizona's level.

"Arizona has been doing what they do for 16 or 17 years," Romar said. "I don't think we'll have to wait another 16 years. If we're able to sustain this for a few more years, then I'll be able to say, 'Yeah, we've elevated it.'"

Washington historically wasn't a force in the Pac-10, yielding to Arizona, Stanford and UCLA. But there's no question the Huskies — a talented, unselfish squad — are contenders now.

They have their best record in 29 years, since coach Marv Harshman's team opened the 1975-76 season 17-1. The Hus-

"They have great depth, and without a doubt they are the most athletic team in the conference, with us being second."

Lute Olson
Arizona coach

kies have won 18 straight at home, the school's longest such streak in 20 years.

"They are playing lights out. They have great depth and without a doubt they are the most athletic team in the conference, with us being second," Olson said. "They have great chemistry. We have better size. It will be a good game."

Washington's lineup includes athletic guard Nate Robinson, standout shooter Tre Simmons, defensive stopper Bobby Jones and steady point guard Will Conroy. Off the bench, it's rebounder Jamaal Williams. "Coach Romar has prepared us very well. He has given us a formula to win. It's team chemistry. The set of guys we have, we really like each other. We really believe in each other."

The Huskies also have Brandon Roy, who's back after tearing a knee ligament

when Washington won the Great Alaska Shootout in November, beating current Top 25 teams Alabama, Oklahoma and Utah. Arguably the team's most versatile player, Roy was a Seattle high school star who considered going straight to the NBA. Ultimately, he picked Washington over Arizona.

"My dad said, 'You know if you pass on Arizona and go to Washington, every time Arizona beats you, it's going to eat at you.' So every time I play Arizona, I've got a chip on my shoulder," Roy said with a laugh.

Huskies fans weren't chuckling in recent years when talented in-state players like Jamaal Crawford went to Michigan, Donny Marshall to Connecticut and by Rimdour to Oregon. Jason Terry and Michael Dickerson played for Olson at Arizona.

Times are changing, though. Four Huskies starters are from Seattle and the suburbs. In November, Romar's staff landed seven heralded recruits — three key in-state players. One recruiting service listed the class No. 4 in the country.

Forward Jon Brockman from Snohomish, Wash., picked Washington over Duke, and forward Martell Webster of Seattle Prep is considered the Pac-10's top incoming recruit and No. 5 in the nation by one scouting service.

"If we had a losing season last year, we'd still have been able to get some good players but not nearly the class we have,"



In his third year at Washington, Lorenzo Romar is getting his program closer to emulating Arizona, Thursday's opponent.

Romar said. "It shows we're headed in the right direction. People are starting to believe in us."

Win or lose in the desert this week, the Huskies are rising.

"They've won 12 of their last 13, including three straight. Arizona is remarkably similar, winning four in a row and 13 of 14."

"Our goal was to finish eighth every year," Romar said. "Our goal was eventually to be in contention to win the Pac-10." Just like Arizona.

Waldorf and Funk among five Hope Classic leaders

The Associated Press

LA QUINTE, Calif. — Duffy Waldorf rolled in eight birdie putts, didn't make a bogey and still had lots of company atop the leader board.

Golf roundup
Waldorf's 8-under 64 in Wednesday's opening round of the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic was only good enough to put him in a five-way tie for the lead.

Fred Funk, Robert Damron, Ted Purdy and Joe Ogilvie also opened the 90-hole tournament with 64s.

Fred Couples, the 1998 champion, had a 65 and was in another group of five in the desert tournament in which scores traditionally are among the lowest of the year.

Defending champion Phil Mickelson, who also won the event in 2002, shot 66 and was tied with six others.

Only 13 of the 128 players finished the first round over par.

Mike Weir, the 2003 Hope champion, carded a 71, leaving him tied for 93rd.

The players rotate among four courses for the first four days of the pro-am, then the low 70 pros and ties play the final round at PGA West on Sunday.

Waldorf, looking for his first victory in almost five years, began his round at PGA West by rolling in a 6-foot birdie putt on the first hole, then finished it with a fine shot out of the bunker and a 4-foot birdie putt on the final hole.

He was deadely accurate with his

irons most of the day, setting up short birdie putts.

"Accuracy and good putting for me today," Waldorf said. "I putted the best I've putted this year, really had good pace on the ball and was reading the greens well."

"I kept the ball in play for the most part, didn't get in a lot of trouble."

Couples was pleased with his round, but cautious about getting too greedy.

"You can't go around thinking you're going to shoot 7-under out here every day," he said after his round at Tamarisk Country Club. "What I'm trying to pay attention to is how I'm hitting the ball."

"What I did today is I really drove the ball well, compared to San Diego, where I was everywhere. Today I hit the ball long and straight and the course played easy."

Mickelson, coming off a tie for 56th at Torrey Pines in his 2005 debut, is seeking improvement.

"My short irons, certainly that's an area I need to work on a lot this week," said Mickelson, who beat Skip Kendall in a playoff to win the event last year.

David Duval shot 10-over 82 at PGA West, 23 shots more than when he won the tournament on the final day six years ago with a tour record-tying 59 on the same course.

Montgomery shoots 65, leads by three in Singapore

SINGAPORE — Colin Montgomerie shot 7-under-par 65 Thursday to take a three-stroke lead after the first round of



Actor/comedian George Lopez reads a green during the Bob Hope Classic on Wednesday. Celebrities play with pros during the first four days of the 90-hole event that is played on four courses.

the Caltech Masters.

The defending champion made seven birdies at the Laguna National Golf and Country Club to lead Nick Dougherty, Mark Foster and Danny Chia, who all shot 68. Seven were tied at 69.

Currently ranked 82nd in the world, Montgomerie has set a goal of returning to the top 25, and Thursday pronounced himself "happier on and off the course ... as I have ever been."

Plenty of talk, no settlement, in NHL lockout

BY IRA PODELL
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The NHL and the players' association were still talking.

With the season on the brink of being canceled, negotiations were planned Thursday night in New York with the chance of another get-together Friday.

The sides met Wednesday for 5½ hours in Toronto, but there was no indication whether progress had been made to end the lockout and save the hockey season.

It marked the second straight week the sides met on consecutive days. If enough progress was made Thursday, talks were expected to resume Friday.

The lockout reached its 134th day Thursday and has forced the cancellation of 721 of 1,230 regular-season games, plus the All-Star Game. If an agreement isn't reached soon, the NHL will likely become the first North American sports league to lose an entire season to a labor dispute.

For the second time this week, rumors swirled that the NHL was prepared to make another proposal to the players' association. Bill Daly, the league's chief legal officer, declined comment Thursday afternoon.

If a new offer is pushed across the table, it would be the first since mid-December when the union invited the league back to negotiations with a proposal that featured a 24 percent rollback of all existing contracts and a luxury-tax system.

The league countered five days later with a salary-cap structure, a concept the NHL is insisting on and one the players' association says it will never accept.

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T.O.'s ankle gives media something to run with

Let's just hand the Super Bowl MVP award to Terrell Owens right now. Even if he doesn't play a single down for the Philadelphia Eagles in the big game, he will deserve it. Even if the New England Patriots win, Owens should be the one.

Remember, the media vote on these things, and his attempt to become the latest Curt Schilling, Willie Reed or Kirk Gibson creates a much-needed topic for discussion. The industry has hours of video and yards of paper to fill, and the status of Owens' busted ankle is real drama, if not real news.

Will he play or won't he? The coach says bet on it. The trainer says maybe. Owens says he'll be there, because he has been healed spiritually.

Owens jokes at practice. Trainer says "our risk-reward is different than the doctor's risk-reward."

The story has already been inflated to the point of bursting. By next week, football fans everywhere will recognize the Eagles' trainer as a member of the family, a fixture in their living rooms. The coverage will be incessant, every day, every hour—even if it means nothing more than repeatedly repeating Wednesday's news conference.

Gwen Knapp



There will be no time-out on T.O.

But if he has spared reporters a trip to see the long snapper's second cousin who whistles Popsicle sticks into images of Paul Tagliabue, we will all be grateful. The two weeks between the conference championships and the Super Bowl require some kind

of distraction, regardless of what the coaches like to say. But for the Eagles, the distraction may be even more valuable than a healthy Owens.

They are playing a team that will be in their third Super Bowl in four years. For the Patriots, professional detachment from the hype of the game is possible. They're unlikely to be overwhelmed by the reality of it. But by the Eagles try to treat the Super Bowl like any other game, they will be deluding themselves. The tension needs to be broken, and the T.O. debate could be the right hammer.

Several of the Eagles have already made it clear that they do not appreciate the suggestions that they need Owens to win. They are still being judged by their performance in last year's NFC title game, in which their receivers were knocked around by

Carolina's defensive backs. But the team overall is much better this year, because of the addition of Jevon Kearse on the defensive line and the good health of multi-dimensional running back Brian Westbrook.

Owens added to the offense, but he has also been given credit for upping the swagger factor in the locker room. In a weird way, his absence may have done just as much for the team's confidence. The Eagles won two playoff games without him, including Sunday's dismantling of Atlanta, which committed just one turnover and still couldn't stay with the Eagles.

In Jacksonville, they will be feeding off the athlete's favorite energy source—a perceived disrespect. If they take the field without T.O., after hearing and reading about him all week, they won't miss him nearly as much as most pundits believe. (Chad Pennington and Chad Lewis are a more urgent problem.)

If Owens does come out, they will get an emotional lift, but the real issue will be



Owens

whether he is healthy enough to play at or close to his peak. If not, will Andy Reid have the courage to keep him on the sideline, or use him sporadically as a decoy? That's what we get to ponder for the next 10 days, and the Patriots will surely appreciate it. The hot air in advance of the game will blow more toward the Eagles, giving the Pats room to breathe. They get to continue being Patriots, the Super Bowl champions, excellent in all the little ways that media day doesn't begin to explain.

With two weeks between the Super Bowl and the conference championship games, T.O. can't really be like other players would-be champs. The game before Schilling's Game 6 victory in the ALCS, the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees played for 5 hours, 49 minutes. The game before that, they played for 5 hours, 2 minutes. Reporters and fans barely had time to catch their breath before Schilling took the mound on an ankle leaking blood.

For the Super Bowl, there is too much time, not enough information, and barely any action. An investigative reporter might try to catch one of the coaches in a smile, but it won't make much of a story. No one's a scoreless tie, so it's T.O. to the rescue, possibly for the Eagles, definitely for the media.

Gwen Knapp is a columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle.

Cowher's vow: 'This group will get back up'

By ALAN ROBINSON
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH—Pittsburgh Steelers coach Bill Cowher isn't ready to forget about 16 victories just because of another bad play loss.

Cowher, no doubt aware his team is being dismissed again for its inability to win a big game, said these Steelers set a high standard for his future teams with their unselfishness and ability to overcome adversity.

"Please do not allow the one game to define this season," Cowher said. "To finish 16-2, 15-1 in the regular season, and win 15 straight games is quite an achievement."

The Steelers manhandled Super Bowl finalists New England and Philadelphia in consecutive weeks during the season, but became only the second NFL team to go 15-1 and to reach the Super Bowl, joining the 1998 Minnesota Vikings.

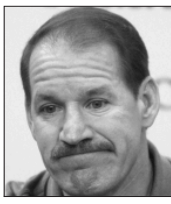
The one-sided loss in the rematch against New England on Sunday resulted in an emotional team meeting Monday and caused a loss one player, wide receiver Hines Ward, to break into tears.

"It was a very close football team, which made the hurt that much more," Cowher said. "I have always believed the position of any one person or group of people should not be how many times you get knocked down, it should be how many times you get back up."

"In this group will get back up. This is not the end. In my mind, it is the beginning."

Cowher did not address the repeated failure in conference championship games or strategic points of Sunday's loss, including his much-criticized decision to kick a field goal early in the fourth quarter with the Steelers in position to close with 34-27.

That move visibly deflated the largest home crowd in Steelers history and, with Pittsburgh's momentum suddenly halted, the Patriots scored the next 10 points.



Bill Cowher said, "I have always said I believe the measure of any one person or group of people should not be how many times you get knocked down, it should be how many times you get back up."

AP

"Life is full of disappointments," Cowher said. "Sometimes we wonder why. But ours is not to wonder why, ours is to continue to try. We will do that."

The Steelers' roster is bound to change, with linebacker Kendrick Bell and wide receiver Plaxico Burress among those likely to leave as free agents. Running back Jerome Bettis hasn't decided if he will return for a 13th NFL season.

But Cowher expects his assistant coaches to return—a change from a year ago, when offensive coordinator Mike Mularkey left to become Buffalo's head coach and defensive coordinator, and Tim Lewis was fired.

Cowher also said Ben Roethlisberger did not break two toes on his right foot, as the rookie said Tuesday. The quarterback might have mildly aggravated a toe injury that occurred in high school or college but does not need treatment, Cowher said.

The Steelers' ability to overcome numerous injuries by having backups step in and play like starters caused Cowher to re-evaluate his previous policy that a starter shouldn't lose his job to injury. Maddox, Bell, running back Duce Staley and cornerback Chad Scott were among those who didn't return to the lineup after becoming healthy.

"I understand somebody getting frustrated by it or upset by it but, at the same time, (if) somebody comes in playing well and you're playing well as a team, I don't think you disrupt that," Cowher said.

Despite the Steelers' numerous injuries, only backup tight end Matt Cushing (wrist) and running back Vernon Haynes (knee) needed offseason surgery.

Cowher said Roethlisberger and offensive coordinator Ken Whisenand also wants Burress back, though it seems likely he will sign elsewhere. Burress and Cowher had a long talk following Monday's meeting.

"I think he's matured as a person, (with) his work ethic and his approach to the game," Cowher said. "If that was the last time I talked to him, I wanted him to know how I felt."

Couch had damage to right rotator cuff

From wire reports

MOBILE, Ala. — Tim Couch's career wasn't just derailed by tendinitis in 2004.

The former Cleveland Browns quarterback was diagnosed with fraying in his right rotator cuff, his agent Tom Condon said Wednesday from the site of the Senior Bowl.

Couch, the No. 1 overall pick in the 1999 NFL Draft, was released by the Browns on June 11 and signed with the Green Bay Packers. But Couch performed poorly in training camp with the Packers and was let go in the final cuts.

He spent the season out of football. A two-day tryout with the Chicago Bears in midseason was a disappointment when Couch was unable to throw the second day.

Couch said Couch's rotator cuff didn't require surgery. But Couch went through a rehab program devised by renowned orthopedist James Andrews of Birmingham, Ala.

"He's been throwing for about 10 days and looks fantastic," Condon said of Couch.

Couch also has suffered elbow tendinitis since he left Cleveland. Couch was sacked 166 times in five seasons with the Browns.

Tollner joins Lions as offensive coordinator

ALLEN PARK, Mich. — The Detroit Lions hired Ted Tollner as offensive coordinator on Monday, replacing him with head coach Steve Mariucci.

The 64-year-old Tollner replaces Sherman Lewis, who retired after the regular season. Tollner was offensive coordinator for San Francisco last year and quarterbacks coach for the 49ers from 2002-2003.



Rossom, Surtain added to P. Bow roster

Atlanta Falcons return specialist Allen Rossom was selected to the NFC Pro Bowl said Wednesday as an injury replacement for Detroit's Eddie Drummond.

Miami Dolphins cornerback Patrick Surtain was added to the AFC squad, replacing injured Baltimore Ravens cornerback Chris McAlister.

Talks for new stadium for Giants getting badly

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Prospects for a new Giants Stadium dimmed Wednesday when the New York Giants and the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority slipped farther apart in three fruitless hours of negotiations.

"Right now I am not very optimistic," Giants Executive Vice President John Mara said.

The Giants have offered to pay the entire \$700 million construction cost for the proposed 80,000-seat stadium, which would be built adjacent to the existing 28-year-old facility. The two sides are far apart on the team's ability to coexist with the Xanadu retail and entertainment project being planned for the area around Continental Airlines Arena, game day parking arrangements and several other issues.

Plans for the Xanadu project call for building nearly 5 million square feet of retail, entertainment and office space on top of 4,000 existing parking spaces.

SPORTS



Injured Owens deserves an MVP award for helping fill a two-week void, Page 39

Duke gets dumped

Alumni-inspired Terps upset No. 2 Blue Devils

By KEITH PARSONS
The Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — Maryland coach Gary Williams brought in a few experts before facing second-ranked Duke.

Former stars Steve Blake, Juan Dixon and Laron Profit visited practice this week, giving the current Terrapins a few lessons. They talked about having fun, about believing in themselves and about giving a full effort against the undefeated Blue Devils.

"That was huge," forward Nik Caner-Medley said. "That was the hardest we practiced all year."

Caner-Medley and his teammates carried that message to the game, giving Maryland an improbable upset.

The junior had 25 points before leaving with an ankle injury, and Travis Garrison

and Ekene Ibekwe finished off the Blue Devils at the free-throw line in a 75-66 victory Wednesday night.

The Terrapins (12-5, 3-3 Atlantic Coast Conference) lost three of their previous five games, all by at least 15 points. But they hung with Duke (15-1, 5-1) throughout and allowed only two points in the final 3½ minutes.

"I just thought they played a little bit harder than we did," Blue Devils coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "We didn't have the attitude that we've had the entire year. This team has to have an edge all the time."

Ibekwe gave Maryland the lead for good with a tough layup in traffic off an inbounds play set up by Williams during a timeout.

That made it 66-64 with 1:23 left, and the Blue Devils had no answer.

Daniel Ewing missed badly on a three-pointer, and Garrison started a parade at the line for the Terps. Garrison was 5-for-6 in the final minute and Ibekwe was 4-for-4 to close it out.

"It was all about the players," Williams said. "We struggled a little bit this year with our identity, for whatever reason, and I'll take responsibility for it, but we do have pride in our program."

Ibekwe came off the bench for the first time this season and scored 15 points. John Gilchrist had 10 for Maryland.

"To be on a big stage like this and get the win is huge," Caner-Medley said. "My teammates had so much heart. I really was impressed with them."

SEE DUKE ON PAGE 36



Maryland's Chris McCray gets a slam dunk over Duke's Lee Melchionni during the second half of the Terps' upset victory Wednesday at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

Highs and lows Down Under



Top-seeded Roger Federer, left, had his 26-match winning streak stopped by Marat Safin in a classic 4½-hour match in the Australian Open semifinals. Serena Williams, right, also played a memorable match, beating Maria Sharapova in a third-set tiebreaker. See details on Page 33.



BC escapes Providence with 17th straight win

Page 37



Determined James overcomes injury to aid Cavs' win

Page 34

Hired by Nuggets, Karl ends two-year hiatus

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